Forestry Commission Guide

Galloway Forest Park

HMSO 80p net

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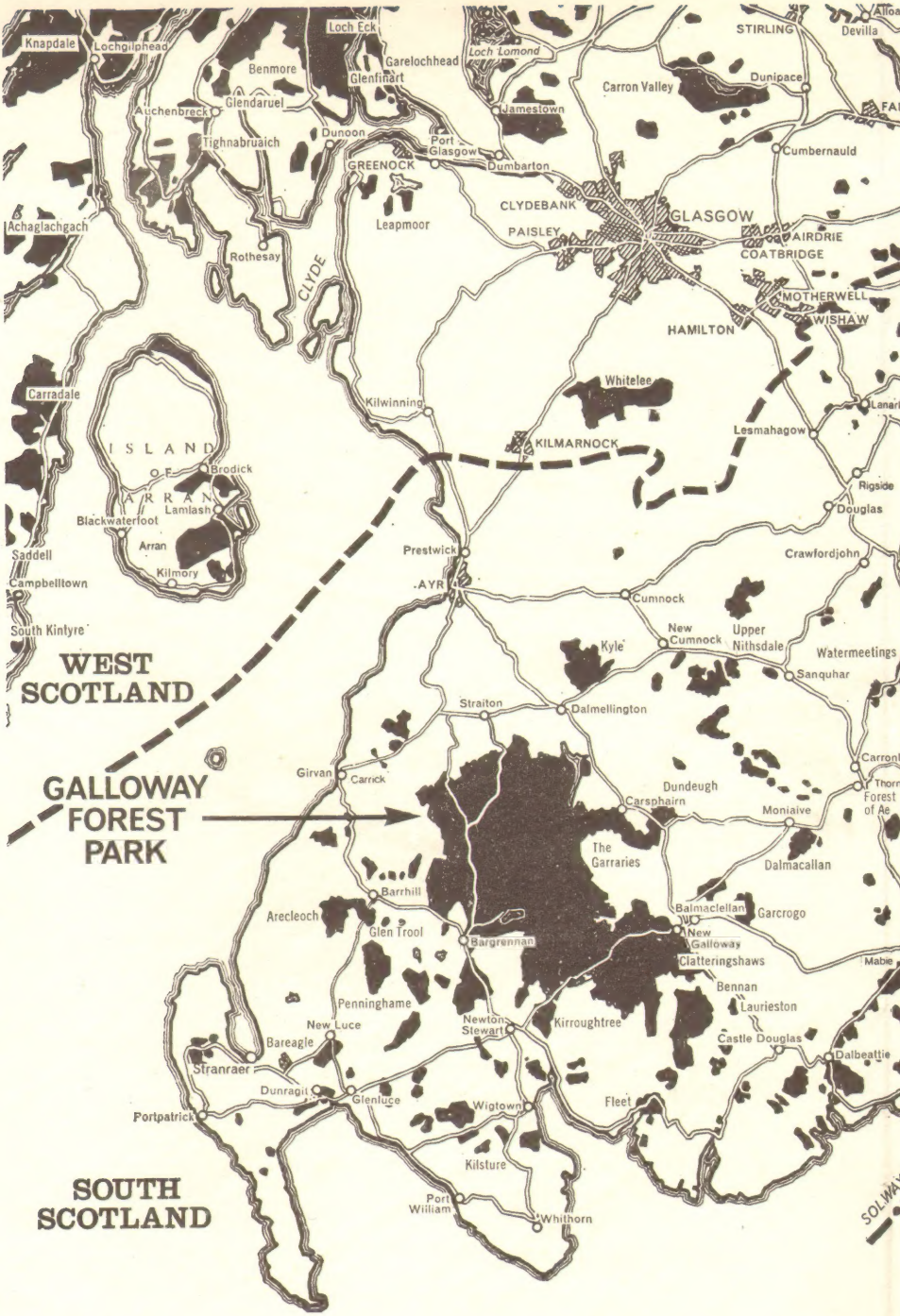
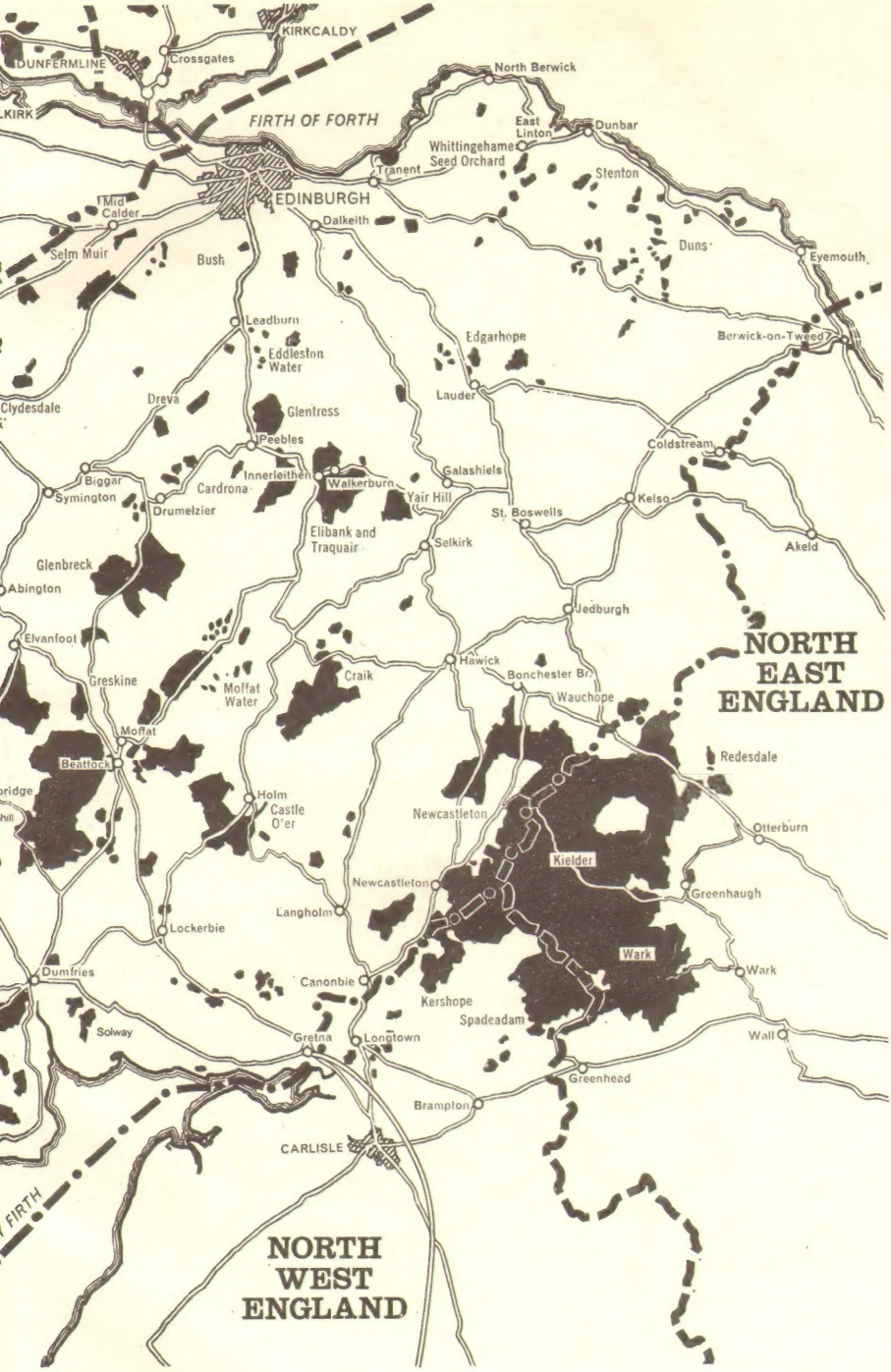
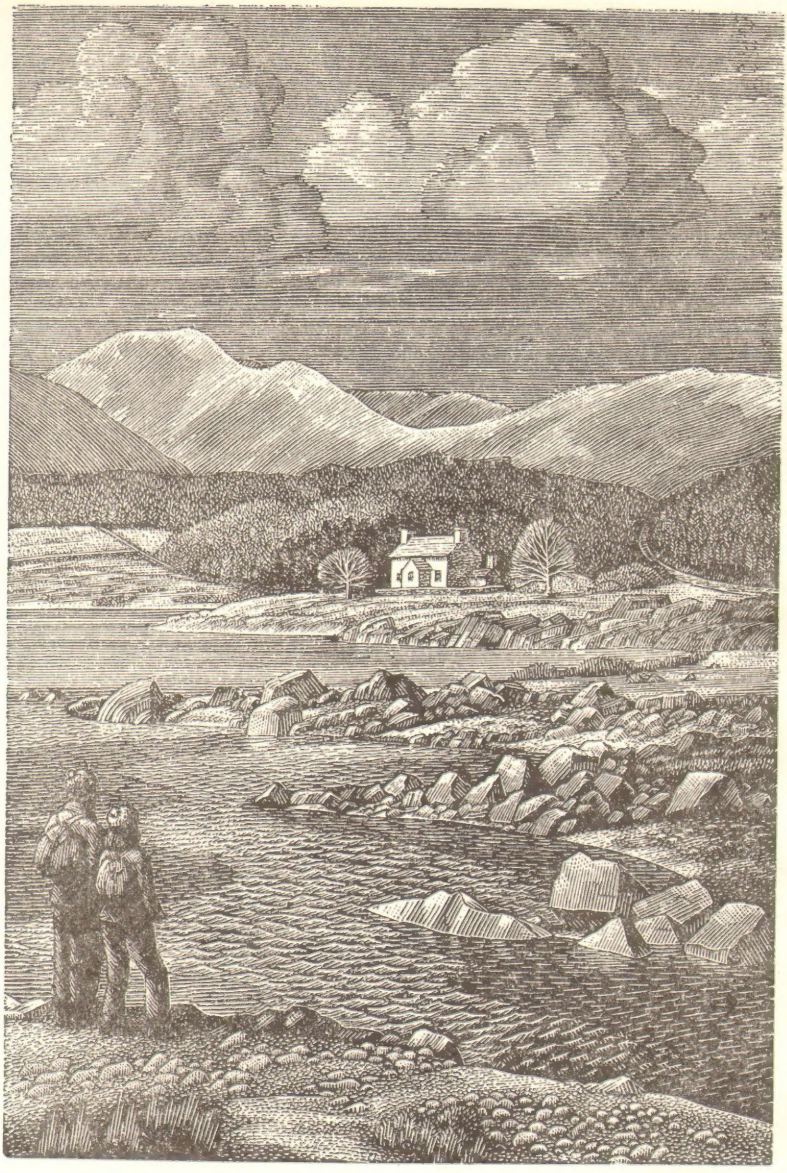


FORESTS OF SOUTHERN SCOTLAND

Most of the Forests shown lie in the South Conservancy (Headquarters, Dumfries). Those north of the upper diagonal line are in the West Conservancy (Headquarters, Glasgow).


KIRKCALDY
DUNFERMLINE
Crossgates
KIRK
FIRTH OF FORTH
North Berwick
East Linton
Dunbar
Whittingehame
Seed Orchard
Tranent
Stenton
EDINBURGH
Mid Calder
Dalkeith
Selm Muir
Bush
Duns
Eyemouth
Leadburn
Eddleston Water
Edgarhope
Berwick-on-Tweed
Clydesdale
Dreva
Glentress
Lauder
Peebles
Coldstream
Biggar
Symington
Innerleithen
Cardrona
Walkerburn
Galashiels
Yair Hill
Kelso
Drumelzier
St. Boswells
Elibank and Traquair
Selkirk
Akeld
Glenbreck
Abington
Jedburgh
Elvanfoot
Hawick
Bonchester Br.
Wauchope
NORTH EAST ENGLAND
Greskine
Moffat Water
Craik
Moffat
Redesdale
Beattock
Holm
Castle O'er
Newcastleton
Otterburn
Kielder
Newcastleton
Greenhaugh
Langholm
Lockerbie
Wark
Dumfries
Canonbie
Wark
Kershope
Spadeadam
Solway
Gretna
Longtown
Wall
Greenhead
Brampton
CARLISLE
NORTH WEST ENGLAND

Galloway Forest Park



Loch Doon and The Merrick

Forestry Commission Guide

Galloway Forest Park

Edited by
Herbert L. Edlin BSc
Forestry Commission

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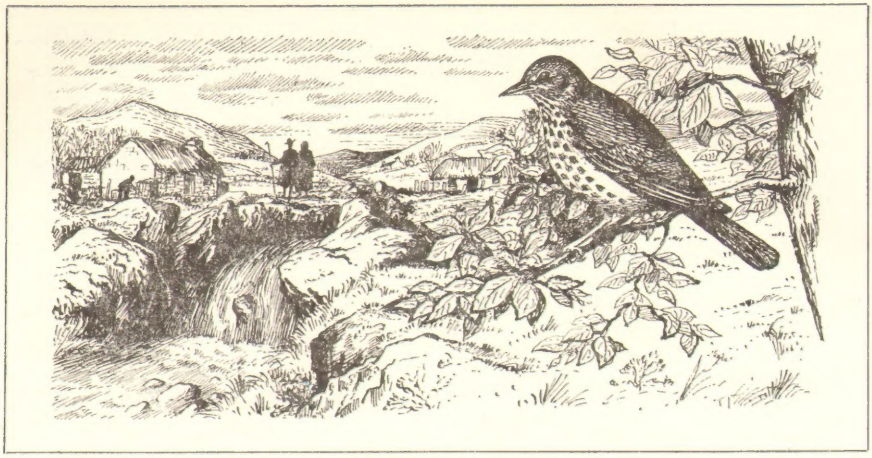

The Banks o' Doon

Ye banks and braes o' bonie Doon,
  How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair!
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
  And I sae weary fu' o' care!

Thou'll break my heart, thou warbling bird,
  That wantons thro' the flowering thorn;
Thou minds me o' departed joys,
  Departed never to return.

Oft hae I rov'd by bonie Doon,
  To see the rose and woodbine twine,
And ilka bird sang o' its luve,
  And fondly sae did I o' mine.

Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
  Fu' sweet upon its thorny tree;
And my fause luver staw my rose,
  But, ah! he left the thorn wi' me.

Burns

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The chapter heading verses are drawn from the works of Robert Burns, Scotland's national poet, who spent his life in this region, and drew inspiration from the Galloway countryside.

Foreword

Sir Samuel Strang Steel BT,TD
Forestry Commissioner 1932–49

In deciding to create a Forest Park in Galloway the Forestry Commissioners made a wise decision, and it is their hope that the charm of the scenery and the historic associations within the boundaries of the Forest Park may give great pleasure and satisfaction to all who visit it. At the same time, a Guide such as this will be of intrinsic interest to those who are especially fond of nature, helping them to study the bird life, the wild flowers and the various geological formations to be found in this area.

The thriving new forests which make up the Galloway Forest Park contain a large stretch of the finest and highest hill country in the South of Scotland. This district is entirely unspoilt and has been little changed by the hand of man, and yet is within easy reach of the populous parts of Ayrshire, Renfrewshire and Lanarkshire, as well as the holiday resorts along the Galloway shore.

The views from the high peaks of the range of mountains surrounding the Merrick are unsurpassed, and the climb to one of these high tops is quite easy and well within the compass of most young and fit people; there are, as well, innumerable and delightful walks in the valleys on good roads and paths, suitable for older people.

The Forestry Commissioners feel especially grateful to those who have written such valuable contributions to this Guide, which should be obtained beforehand by all those intending to visit this magnificent Forest Park.

An Appreciation of the Galloway Forest Park

Andrew McCormick

Included in the Galloway Forest Park are seven forests, Glen Trool, Carrick, Bennan, Dundeugh, The Garraries, Clatteringshaws and Kirroughtree, having a total area of over 165,000 acres, or more than 240 square miles. All these forests are places of great natural beauty, which will afford wide scope and variety for ramblers and other lovers of nature. It is gratifying to know that several proprietors and tenants of lands in the vicinity of the Forest Park have agreed to allow walkers to use fixed routes across their properties, and this concession enlarges still further the area of wild uplands made available for public enjoyment. This Forest Park is of easy access from populous centres. It also contains a great many hills which will suit the physical capacity of most of our visitors, leaving the others, including trained mountaineers, to seek their exercise on higher hills if they see fit.

Glen Trool itself, and its rock-strewn hinterland of the Forest of Buchan, are regions of great beauty, with wonderful streams and rock fastnesses, as the hills are appropriately called. The chain of beautiful lochs—Doon, Enoch, Arron, Neldricken, Valley, Dhu, Dee, Narroch, and the two lochs of Glenhead, with Loch Trool as a lovely pendant, make the place unforgettable. Three great climbers of the Lake District hills and of the Swiss mountains, as they stood one day at the south end of Loch Enoch and looked away over its blue-grey waters towards Mullwharchar (the hill of the hunting horn) agreed that, with its many indented bays, fringed with white sand, Loch Enoch looked like a silver tray, and was the most beautiful mountain tarn they had ever beheld.

Glen Trool, Carrick, Bennan, Clatteringshaws, Dundeugh, Garraries and Kirroughtree Forests vie with one another as to which is the most beautiful. The paths and roads through the delightful valley of Palnure are numerous and easily traced on most maps, and though Kirroughtree Forest, which borders that valley, may not possess the grandeur of the Glen Trool and Carrick hills or the lakescape beauty which has been added to Cairn Edward Forest by a twelve miles widened and deepened stretch of the River Ken, yet Kirroughtree has its own claims, as a unit of this Forest Park, to be equally as attractive and popular as any of these others.

As the frame has much to do with showing a picture to best advantage, so the surrounding country and its history have much to do with the popularity of a Forest Park. There are always days on which a rest may be needed, or the weather is more suitable for bicycle or motor runs, or walks on level ground.

If you could take an aeroplane and go flying in daylight on a fine autumn day high over Galloway, you could scarcely avoid being attracted by our beautiful seaboard, with its shore roads and footpaths running beside it from Ayr to Dumfries. You could not fail to notice with pride our fine arable and pasture lands, dotted with woodlands and white farmhouses and steadings, and studded with attractive towns and villages. You would be charmed to behold the purple moorlands stretching away up to the foot of the ranges of mountains which form the backbone of Galloway. And you would also with delight observe the rivers, running across from the uplands to the sea, the Nith, the Urr Water, the Dee, the Ken, the Fleet, the Cree, the Bladnoch, the Tarff, and the Luce. These, rising from inland springs and lochs, flow like molten gold and silver along the lovely valleys and glens which they have done so much to fashion. Having seen all these beautiful things you would believe, as we do, that it would be difficult to find a place of similar size to excel it for varied, colourful picturesqueness.

Galloway is a compact province, and from that brief description you will learn that it enjoys the scenery of hill, glen, moorland and pastoral and arable land, and of lochs, rivers, and the sea. So far our region is quite unsullied. You may walk for days at a time on its mountains and meet no one. You can take a motor run of eighty-five miles through these uplands and meet only one motor car. Galloway is a queer kind of a will o' the wisp. It gratifies one continually, yet all the time it lures one on by developing beauty already seen, and by affording new prospects.

The charm of Galloway is manifold. Its picturesqueness is, to the casual visitor, its chief attraction. It is not, however, its natural beauty alone that wields the spell. Ere one is bound in thrall one must also have learned its romantic story and realised what manner of folks the forebears of the

The Battle o' the Steps o' Trool

Galloway people were. Long ago when people of savage natures had to be contended with, it took the tough, rugged natures of strong determined men to rough-hew the destinies of Gallovidians; and even at that time, there were forebears of noble nature and beautiful character. There was Trost of the Long Knife who sacrificed the lives of his father, his brother and himself rather than reveal to Niall of the Nine Hostages the secret of the brewing of heather ale; the saintly Devorgilla who erected monasteries and bridges in Galloway, and as a widow carried about with her her husband's heart in a silver casket; and the aul' wife o' Craigencalzie, who set for Gallovidians a high standard of hospitality, when to the Bruce's request 'for a nicht's rest for a wanderer'—she replied 'A' wanderers are welcome to rest here for the sake o' him wha is himsel' a wanderer'; which makes a Galloway welcome proverbial to this day.

So it results that we have in Galloway people of diverse natures—brave, determined people side by side with homely, kindly, hospitable, and generous-natured people. One must realise the sturt and strife and stress, as well as the pathos and happiness, which Gallovidians of all times have passed through, ere it can be realised whence spring all these different characteristics.

The Galloway Forest Park is a real paradise for hill walkers. The Merrick [2764 feet], the highest knuckle of the Awful Hand range, is the highest hill in the South of Scotland. But there are at least ten hills of over 2000 feet. One could arrange daily walks for a whole month—starting from my own home at Newton Stewart, and there would be little repetition in them. Our mountains are suited for anyone who is an average walker, and is sound in wind and limb, especially for anyone who likes leisurely to ascend by the easiest route and spend the whole day rambling along a range of mountains with glorious prospects of colourful moorland and grand hills all around. Then there are the lovely glens running into the uplands for those who no longer aspire to reach the summits—and who may derive much consolation from Schopenhauer, who said that 'a church is best viewed from the outside, a public house from the inside and a mountain from the foot'.

The view from the top of the Merrick has been regarded by some as a wilderness of stones, by others as the 'riddlin's o' creation', but each time we look at the view from that crest we are impressed with the fact that it would be much more accurate to regard it as one of nature's well-ordered rock gardens. The view shows why our clever Celtic forbears named that mountain range the Awful Hand, for it has many fingers and many glens running in between, and looks like a gigantic octopus with its fearsome tentacles stretching out all around. Crockett describes that view as a

'weird wild world, new and strange, not yet out of chaos —not yet approved of God'. As we saw it once with the mist filling its awesome cauldrons and defining its eerie, knife-like cornices, it was a place of wildest grandeur. And as I climbed up the knife-like edge of the Spear o' the Merrick, a number of ravens which had evidently lost their bearings, suddenly flew out of the mist which filled the Howe o' the Cau'dron, flapped their wings around our heads, and as suddenly sought shelter in the mist again. One wonders how even a goat can subsist amongst such a rocky country, and yet curiously enough at Tunskeen there lived for many a year a man called 'Tunskeen' and at Hunt Ha' a man called 'Hunty' and each of these men must have weighed well over twenty stones!

As we retraced our steps to the col, I kept repeating aloud, as I love to do, the fine, sonorous, Gaelic names of some of these Galloway hills such as Benyellary, Bennanbrack, Cairnbaber, Cairngarroch, Craigmawhannal, the Corran o' Portmark, Mullwharchar and the Garryhorn. Then we recalled with sad regrets the fact that although the speaking of Gaelic lingered in Galloway until about 300 years ago, there isn't as much as a single Gaelic proverb left to record that fact. The mist whisking round the cairn of the Merrick made it look like a volcano. Suddenly from the top there came the sweet voice of a singer, singing Marjorie Kennedy Fraser's *Eriskay Love-lilt*, with its haunting refrain:

Vair me oro van o,
Vair me oro van ee,
Vair me oru o ho—
Sad am I without thee.

That fanned the *grioshach* (peat embers), and it seemed to me that the Gaelic spirit and traditions of Galloway had found expression in her song and leapt into life once more.

But don't let the Merrick climb absorb your attention too much! I prefer to climb the Dungeon and Craignaw. There are hundreds of hills in Galloway from the top of which you can obtain wonderful views. Some people climb the Merrick, and think they have exhaused the possibilities. Better far begin with a five-hundred-foot hill, and proceed to climb all the others; then you will secure a better idea of the benefits which accrue from such a Forest Park.

On the Kells Range there is a well, known as The King's Well, where doubtless King Robert the Bruce often quenched his thirst when hunting or being hunted. The ruins of a shelter were pointed out to me fifty years ago by the farmer of the Buchan, as the place wherein King Robert sheltered for the night before the battle of the Steps o' Trool.

According to Barbour, the Bruce was a wise leader and made great use

of the element of surprise in his fights and battles. The sites of many of them are easily located and there is nothing impossible about the author's descriptions. Take, for example, the fight where the Bruce and his foster brother and another henchman routed two hundred McDouall followers at The Ford on the Buchan:

An' went him down to a morass,
Oot o' a wattyr that rynnand was;
And in the bog he found a place.

And fand na ford, that men mycht pass
But quhar him selwyn passit was
And sua strait wes the apcummyng,
That twa men mycht nocht samyn thring,
Na on na maner press thaim sua,
That thai to gidder mycht lang ga.

This ford could only be approached and crossed by one horseman at a time, and that is how the Bruce and his two henchmen succeeded in laying so many McDoualls low and routing the others.

Similarly in regard to Blind Harry's description of the attack Wallace made upon a Galloway stronghold:

A strenth thar was on the watter o' Cree,
Within a rock, rycht stalwart wrocht of tre.
A gait before mycht no man to it wyn,
But with consent off thaim that duelt within.
On the bak side a rock and watter was;
A strait entre forsooth it was to pass.

There is only one place on the whole length of the Water of Cree that conforms to that description, and it is the Moat of Old Monigaff, near Newton Stewart, situated at the confluence of the Penkiln Burn and the Water of Cree.

Some people are inclined to throw doubts upon the truth of the events as described in Barbour's *The Bruce* and Blind Harry's *Wallace*. If these events didn't happen approximately as described, then other events at least as wonderful must have happened ere the Bruce's good fortune had been restored and he had defeated the most powerful country in the western world, after its soldiers had despoiled Scotland on a dozen different occasions, and reduced her to a state of direst poverty.

The sexcentenary of the death of King Robert the Bruce was felt to be a fitting occasion to erect, in Glen Trool, a memorial boulder to mark a sense of the appreciation which Gallovidians hold of the great services which the Bruce rendered to his country, although the ancestors of some of them doubtless supported the Baliol faction. We do not know whether to admire most the attitude of those Gallovidians, many of them kinsmen of the Baliols, who remained for so long loyal to the rightful legal claimant of the

crown; or the attitude of those other Gallovidians, living mostly in the uplands, who saw more clearly that the Bruce, in striking for independence, had got hold of the thing Scotland most needed. The late Professor Sir Robert Rait, Historiographer Royal for Scotland, very rightly and forcefully commended the wisdom of erecting the Bruce Memorial when he said, in dedicating it: 'On the fate of Robert Bruce in Glen Trool there depended the whole future of Scotland, and something of the future of the British race and empire. Glen Trool is the Orleans of the Scottish War of Independence'.

It is worthy of note that the first to subscribe to the Bruce Memorial was the late Mr Kenneth McDouall of Logan—a direct descendant of The McDouall of Logan, a kinsman of the de Baliol faction, who chased the Bruce with bloodhounds; which shows that time has salved that olden feud. The inscription is shown on plate 20.

At the north-east corner of Macaterick Hill stands the great Cove Macaterick, or the 'Aughty of the Star' as Crockett, in his *Raiders*, terms it: ''This,' said Silver Sand, 'is the Aughty of the Star. You have heard of it, but few have ever seen it since the killing times. It is the best hiding place in broad Scotland. It is a commodious shelter roughly floored with small logs and arched with the same, and resembles the inside of a claybiggin.'' As it had long been a safe haven for all wanderers and hunted men, doubtless King Robert often used it as a place of refuge.

The great things that pertain to history are knowledge within the reach of all. We can learn much from history books, and there was no more fair-minded historian than the late Sir Herbert Maxwell, who, out of love for Galloway, did more historical pioneer work and more to elucidate the tangled skein of her story, than any other. He never hesitated to tell the truth, as he saw it, about Galloway, about our idols the Covenanters, about his own family and even, with engaging frankness, about himself.

The Covenanters also sheltered and held, in that wild region, their preachings and conventicles, and died for freedom of worship, as preachers' stones and martyrs' monuments—

> Grey recumbent tombs of the dead in desert places,
> Standing stones on the vacant wine red moor

bear witness. All over Galloway men and women preferred, like Alexander Lynn 'to allow the winds to make whistles of their bones' rather than recant.

Strangely enough, Galloway has drawn forth few great poems, though one recalls those works of genius—Nicholson's *The Brownie of Bladnoch* and Burns' *Scots Wha Hae*. S.R.Crockett, by virtue of his pen so ably descriptive

1 Forest trail sign amid the Buchan oakwoods of Glen Trool; plantations on Lamachan Hill are seen beyond

2 Scotland's most southerly headland, sea cliffs at the Mull of Galloway; note the tide-race, a constant feature here

3 The mighty knuckles of 'The Range of the Awful Hand'. Highest summit is The Merrick [2770 feet], in Gaelic *Tiu Meurig*, meaning 'The Finger' (right of centre). The old farmstead of Shalloch-on-Minnoch is seen on the low ground, with Kirriereoch Hill [2565 feet] directly beyond

4 Craignaw Hill, Back Hill of Bush cottage and Downies Burn; a remote corner of Garraries Forest once occupied as a shepherd's steading

5 Minnoch Falls and Bridge, by the car park on the road to Glen Trool

6 Wild billy-goat

7 Roe deer kid

8 View north over Kirroughtree Forest Nursery towards the Glen Trool peaks. Left to right: Auchlannochy Hill (wooded); Lamachan Hill and Curleywee (twin peaks); Dallash (centre, wooded), far Corserine in the Rhinns of Kells; and Millfore (right)

9 A storm blows up over Curleywee Hill, beyond the Bruce Stone viewpoint at the head of Glen Trool

10 Plantations of larch and pine beside the Minnoch rapids, seen from Minnoch Bridge

of the romantic history of the Galloway uplands, drew from Robert Louis Stevenson that fine poem which contains this poignant soul-cry of the exile:

Be it granted me to behold you again kin dying,
Hills of home! and to hear again the call;
Hear about the graves of the martyrs the peewees crying,
And hear no more at all.

Perhaps we get our enjoyment of our beautiful countryside all too easily. At any rate some of the best poems are from the pens of exiles.

'Guid wine needs nae bush', and so I have endeavoured to give, in the brief space at my disposal, some facts about the Forest Park and about Galloway and its people; but lest I be accused by some of neglecting the text of my sermon, let me, in conclusion, remind you of our Galloway slogan:

Scotland dings creation and Galloway dings Scotland.

But surely the Galloway Forest Park, being the very best part of our beloved region, must ding even Galloway itself, and it will prove a great boon not only to our ain folk but to the whole nation.

Of a' the airts the wind can blaw,
I dearly lo'e the west;
For there the bonie lassie lives,
The lassie I lo'e best;
There wild-woods grow, and rivers row,
And mony a hill between;
But, day and night, my fancy's flight,
Is ever wi' my Jean.

I Love my Jean

History and Tradition

Herbert L.Edlin

The Galloway Forest Park holds few dwellings today, yet it lies at the heart of a land with a long and remarkable story. The ancient kingdom of Galloway comprised at its greatest extent the modern counties of Wigtown and Kirkcudbright, now included in the Dumfries and Galloway Region, and the Carrick division of Ayrshire, now a part of Strathclyde. Though at times it was independent, it came in turn under the dominion of Rome, Norway and England, before it gained its present status within the Scottish realm. Here there is only space to review briefly the varied people who marched across the Galloway scene, and the relics they left behind.

Prehistory

The shores of the Solway Firth, leading on to the Mull of Galloway and the shortest sea crossing to Ireland, attracted the men of the Old Stone Age whose settlements have been discovered around Luce Bay in Wigtownshire. They were fishers and hunters, and their remains include flint arrowheads and knives, along with the bones of fish and whales, and the bones and antlers of the deer they pursued in the native forests. These primitive people haunted the Galloway shores and rivers from 8000 to 2500 BC.

Great woods of oak, alder, birch and Scots pine overspread, in those days, this hilly peninsula of south-west Scotland. When the farmers of the Neolithic or New Stone Age arrived, about 2500 BC, they built their homesteads on the higher ground, for their stone axes were ill-suited to the clearance of the stouter trees. They pastured their sheep and cattle on the braes, and cultivated grain crops. Their dead were buried in stone-walled chambers set within rounded mounds of earth, forming a characteristic *cairn;* examples may be seen at White Cairn near Glen Trool village and King's Cairn on the Water of Deugh, beside Dundeugh Forest; also at Cairnderry, Boreland, and Cairnholy, near Kirkdale. The religious monuments of this era are *standing stones*, such as the pair on Blair Hill, three miles north of Minnigaff, near Newton Stewart. But despite their long residence these Neolithic people have left few monuments hereabouts.

The discovery and mastery of metals, first bronze and later iron, gave the impetus and technical advantage that impelled the Celtic peoples to advance north-west from central Europe. After conquering England, groups of warrior-craftsmen advanced over the Solway, westwards into Galloway, from about 500 BC onwards. Various names—Picts Scots and Britons,

were assumed by different tribes, but those who reached this region kept to their ancient name of *Gael*. This was modified, at a time when the Strathclyde Britons cut them off from other Gaelic tribes, into *Gallgaidhel* or 'stranger Gaels', rendered in the Briton's Welsh speech as *Gallwyddel* (pronounced 'gallwithel'); this gave rise to the modern name of the province. Their speech, as most of the place names still show, was Gaelic, and that tongue survived here until about 300 years ago. Nor did any of the later conquests greatly affect the Gaelic character of the people. One proof of this lies in the frequent occurrence, down to the present day, of surnames beginning with 'Mac'; Macmillan and Macdowall are typical Galloway surnames, and there are many others.

The typical ancient monument surviving from this period is the hill fort, a kind of walled township set on a peak, making it difficult to attack. Galloway as a whole is rich in such remains; nineteen have been recorded in Kirkcudbrightshire, fifteen in Wigtownshire, and five in the south of Ayrshire. But none of these stands in, or even near, the Forest Park, though the territory is, physically, ideal for their construction. Probably their place was taken by the *crannog*, an even more defensible fort built on an artificial island of logs, set up in a shallow loch and approached only by a narrow causeway. The lochs of the Park are ideal for this purpose, and there is a notable crannog in Loch Ronald not far away. Certainly the Park was peopled, for its hills and rivers did not go un-named. Much argument has raged over the meanings of the musical words they bear, so different from other summits in southern Scotland, but nobody has seriously denied that most of them stem from the Gaelic.

Covenanters

The Romans and the early church

The coming of the Gaels to south-west Scotland is usually dated about 500 BC. By the time the Romans arrived, in the first century AD, the Gaels had built up a strong settlement in the Galloway lowlands, with much cultivated land. The principal tribe was the Novantae, and the River Dee found its way on to Ptolemy's map as *Deva Flumen*. In AD 82 the troops of Julius Agricola conquered the Celtic tribes, and Galloway remained a tributary region until the Romans withdrew from Britain soon after AD 400. It lay beyond Hadrian's Wall, which ran from the Solway to the Tyne, but it is now known that the Romans maintained an overlordship of the tribes to the north of that great military barrier. One of their forts, called *Leucophibia*, stood near Whithorn, and was supplied by sea from Maryport in Cumberland. Another was at Glenlochar on the Dee.

St. Ninian, who founded the first church in Scotland, was born at Leucophibia in about AD 362. In the year 385 he travelled to Rome, and ten years later he was consecrated by the Pope as a missionary bishop. He arrived back in Galloway in AD 397, and set up the tiny chapel of *Candida Casa*, the White House, where the burgh of Whithorn now stands. Later a monastery was established, and thereafter the light of the Christian faith, once established, never failed to shine somewhere in Scotland through all the pagan invasions of the Dark Ages.

Once the Roman legions had left Britain, the Galloway Gaels were threatened by attacks from the Strathclyde Britons who were their neighbours to the north. Following the Roman plan, they built a great rampart to keep them out, reaching from Loch Ryan beside Stranraer to the River Nith north of Dumfries, and thence south to Annan on the Solway. Traces of this 'De'ils Dyke' can still be seen in and around the forests of Glen Trool, Kirroughtree and Bennan; it followed the Cree valley near Bargrennan, and then struck east across the hills to Talnotry, Craigencallie, and so on towards Dalry. The dyke was eight feet broad, with a ditch on the northern face, and occasional wall forts or watch towers. It is unlikely that it was continually manned by defenders; more likely it formed a political boundary and a rallying point in times of attack. So far as the scant records go, the dyke helped to preserve the peace for over three centuries.

In AD 740, however, Picts and Scots from the western kingdom of Dalriada, under King Alpin, broke through the wall and invaded Galloway. The Gallovidians allied themselves to the Angles, a Teutonic tribe who were now their neighbours on the east, drove them back, and annexed the Kyle and Carrick regions of Ayrshire. In this way their rule was extended over the whole of the present-day Forest Park lands.

Norsemen and Normans

About the year AD 800, the long ships of the Norse vikings began to appear on the waters of the Solway Firth. Its many estuaries and bays gave a ready foothold to a sea-going power, and the Norsemen remained as overlords of the province for the next 300 years. They gathered an annual rent or tribute from the Gaelic countrymen, a custom recorded in the name of a modern estate and forest, Penninghame; this was originally *pennig hjem*—a homestead for which 'pennies' or money were paid. Other place names of Norse origin include all the fells, from Norse *fjell*, a mountain, the River Fleet, from *fljot*, a river, and the *Rig* (or ridge) of the Jarkness north-east of Loch Trool. One of the early Norse earls of Galloway was Olaf the White, who captured Dublin in 844. In 1014 Sigurd the Stout, Earl of Orkney and Galloway, and grandson of Thorfinn the Skull-cleaver, was killed in Ireland at the battle of Clontarf.

Gradually the power of the Scottish kingdom, based on Edinburgh, came to be felt in this outlying province. This was based in a large degree on the military skill and allegiance of Norman barons who had made their way north from France through England. They brought into Scotland the feudal system, whereby each man owed loyalty to a superior, and they enforced order from the security of stone-built castles. But during the twelfth century the Norse-Gallovidian Earl Fergus still ruled the south-western province. When he died his son Gilbert claimed Wigtownshire, while another son, Uchtred, ruled over what is now the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright. In a fratricidal feud, Gilbert slew Uchtred, but the final victory went to the latter's son, Ronald, who killed Gilbert and was made Lord of Galloway by the Scottish king, William the Lion. Uchtred had a stronghold close to Newton Stewart, called Caer Uchtred, and this gives its name to the modern Kirroughtree Forest, pronounced with a strong stress on the second syllable.

Alan, son of Ronald, organised a war fleet and in 1207 assisted the English king to invade Ireland. In 1220 he captured the Isle of Man from the Norse earl, Olaf, and defied the might of Haakon, King of Norway, who did not dare to face the Gallovidians on the western seas.

Meanwhile the Norman feudal system, and the Roman Catholic church, were extending their influence in the south of the province. Abbeys were built at Saulseat and Glenluce near Stranraer, around Whithorn, and at Tongland and Dundrennan near Kirkcudbright. A string of castles guarded the land and sea routes along the fertile Solway shore. Those nearest the Park were Castle Stewart and Garlies Castle close to Newton Stewart, Earlston Castle north of Dalry, and Loch Doon Castle, which once stood on an islet in Loch Doon. (Its ruins were transferred to the main shore

when the water level was raised, in modern times, to provide hydro-electric power.) In 1292 a Galloway baron of Norman descent, John Baliol, was proclaimed King of Scotland; but he never had independent power and his inglorious reign ended with the formal surrender of his kingdom to Edward I of England in 1296.

The campaign of Robert the Bruce

Scots! wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots! wham Bruce has aften led
Welcome to your gory bed,
  Or to victory!
Now's the day, and now's the hour;
See the front o' battle lour;
See approach proud Edward's power
  Chains and slavery!

In 1300 Edward invaded Galloway with an army, and garrisoned castles at Wigtown, Cruggleton and Buittle. But in 1306 the English power was challenged by Robert the Bruce, Earl of Carrick in Ayrshire. After being proclaimed King of Scotland at Scone, Bruce fled to Ireland, returning with a force of a few hundred patriots to Carrick in the spring of 1307. They were at once obliged to take refuge in the Glen Trool hills, then well wooded and affording sufficient cover. Bruce's first success was gained on Raploch Moss, between Clatteringshaws Loch and the modern Bennan Forest. There, aided by his brother Edward Bruce and Sir James Douglas, he surprised and defeated a substantial English force.

In April of the same year Bruce again sprang a surprise on another English force, led by Aymer de Valence, and numbering 2,000 men. As the English made their way along the narrow path between Loch Trool and the steep rock-strewn slopes of Lamachan Hill, a small band of Scots ambushed them, rolling great boulders down from the crags. This threw the survivors into confusion and they were routed by the Scots at the ensuing Battle o' the Steps o' Trool (*see plates 9, 20*).

After these successes Bruce went to the north-east of Scotland, where his main support lay, leaving his brother Edward to continue a series of harassing actions against the English garrisons and any Gallovidians who supported their cause. Edward Bruce fought a further action near New Galloway, and named the hilltop cairn which preserves his memory on Cairn Edward Hill in Bennan Forest. Later, at Kirroughtree, he defeated a force of Wigtownshire men, led by the MacDoualls. Other battles were fought in the Glenkens district and the Dee valley, and many English strongholds were captured before this brilliant campaign ended in 1308.

Eventually Bruce's decisive victory over the English king Edward II, at

Bannockburn in 1314, brought Galloway firmly within the Scottish realm. The main power over the province then passed to the Douglas family, descendants of Bruce's supporter Sir James Douglas, who became Lords of Galloway. Their power ended with the rebellion and defeat of James, the Black Douglas, ninth earl of his line, in 1455.

The Reformation and the Covenanters

During the sixteenth century the Galloway nobles, led by Robert, the fifth Lord Maxwell, played a leading part in the Reformation. In 1560 the Presbyterian church was established as Scotland's official form of religion. The Roman Catholic abbeys had previously held large and valuable estates in the south of Galloway, and these may well have included some of the lands forming part of the Forest Park. All this wealth now passed to the leading noblemen particularly the Kennedys, Earls of Cassilis, whose seat is at Castle Kennedy, close to Stranraer. Their power is recorded in the rhyme:

> From Wigtown tae the toun of Ayr
> Portpatrick tae the cruives o' Cree
> No man may think for tae bide there
> Unless he ride wi' Kennedy.

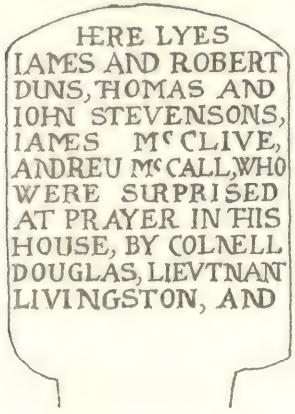
The seventeenth century was a sad period for Galloway, which became deeply involved in the fierce controversies that split the Protestant churches.

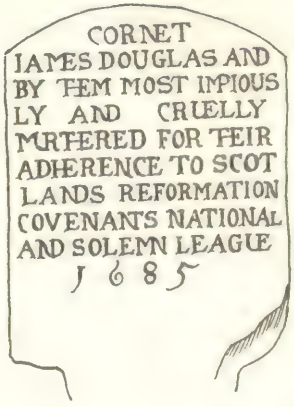
The troubles began in 1597, when James VI first appointed bishops within the Scottish church; in 1603 he succeeded, as James I, to the throne of England, where the established church already had an episcopal form of government. Throughout the reigns of James VI, Charles I, and Charles II, the struggles continued. The majority of the people refused to accept the bishops or anything associated with them, mainly because they distrusted any kind of ceremony as a return to the dominance of Rome.

In 1638 the Presbyterian leaders signed, in Greyfriars Kirk in Edinburgh, the Solemn League and Covenant that became their testament of faith. The Covenanters, and with them the men of Galloway, took an active part in the campaigns of the Civil War between Charles I and the Parliamentarians. But on the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660, Charles II appointed afresh bishops to run church affairs. When the parish ministers refused to accept their authority, the bishops replaced them with curates, and it became obligatory for everyone to attend services conducted in the parish churches, and to abstain from any other form of public worship. This led, in 1666, to the Pentland Rising. It began with an affray at Dalry beside Bennan Forest, and ended with the rout of the small Covenanter force by the Government troops, at Rullion Green, below the

Pentland Hills close to Edinburgh. From that time on, any act of worship outside the approved churches was regarded as treason, to be punished by death if the offenders did not at once recant when apprehended; few were ready to do so, even if time were allowed them.

Despite heavy fines and the threat of summary execution, the Galloway Covenanters and their families continued to hold regular prayer meetings in the remote, tree-clad, hill fortresses that now make up the Forest Park. The grim end of one such meeting is recorded on the Martyrs' Memorial close to Caldon's camp site, where the stone tells its own story:





Peace did not come until the death of Charles II, and the revival, in 1688 under William and Mary, of the Presbyterian church as the established religion of Scotland. By then Galloway had been sorely impoverished by fines, unrest, and the cost of quartering the soldiery.

The eighteenth century was a time of slow recovery from one hundred years of turmoil associated with religious differences. During the rebellion of the 'Old Pretender', the Stuart Prince James, in 1715, Viscount Kenmure, a leading Galloway nobleman, raised forces in his support. His march from Kenmure Castle, just south of New Galloway, is recorded in Burns' lines:

> Kenmure's on and awa', Willie!
> Kenmure's on and awa'
> And Kenmure's lord's the bravest lord
> That ever Galloway saw.

He marched south to Preston and captured that town, but was obliged to surrender to superior government forces; after a trial for high treason he was executed at the Tower of London. Galloway took no part in the rebellion of Charles Edward, the 'Young Pretender', in 1745.

An agricultural revolution

Before the eighteenth century, little of the Galloway land was enclosed by permanent dykes or hedges. The early attempts by the lairds to form 'parks', as the first enclosures were called, were resisted by the common people, and gangs of 'levellers' threw down miles of new walls and banks. In 1723 a force of dragoons was called in to suppress a large gang of levellers, who were defeated at Duchrae, near Bennan Forest. Eventually the lowlands were split up into substantial farms, but the hills that now form the Forest Park remained open.

Early in the nineteenth century the blackfaced sheep became the most profitable form of hill stock, replacing the hardy Galloway cattle on the braes. The whole of the uplands was then divided into big sheep farms, each at least a thousand acres in extent. The work of the sturdy shepherds was made easier by the tendency of each sheep flock to keep to its own ground or 'hirsel', seldom straying on to other slopes, even though no fences restrained the grazing beasts.

These changes in agriculture displaced hundreds of crofting families who had formerly led a hard but contented existence, tilling small patches of fertile ground, and herding cattle around their summer homesteads, or shielings, amid the hills. To provide fresh means of livelihood, the leading landowning families enlarged the few small towns on the Park's fringes. Cotton mills were established at Newton Stewart, Gatehouse of Fleet, and Castle Douglas, but the industry did not long survive. These pleasing burghs, however, owe much of their charm to orderly planning, each by a single hand. New Galloway is another example.

Though there was some emigration, the change from crofting agriculture to modern farming did not at first depress the population. The number of people in Wigtownshire and Kirkcudbrightshire rose from 38,000 in 1755 to 87,000 in 1851. But modern developments, involving more machines but fewer men on the land, and the failure of the region to attract new industries, have led to steady depopulation since then. There are now only 58,000 people in the two counties, and it is one of the aims of the national forestry policy to check any further outflow. Galloway's 220,000 acres of productive forest, all established since 1920, will provide regular employment for 1,000 men, representing—with their dependants—about 4,000 people.

So the forests have returned to Galloway, as a new venture in keeping with the modern Scottish economy, and men tend trees on these hills so rich in history and the relics of the past.

Mountains, Lochs and Rivers

Herbert L.Edlin

A knowledge of the topography of the Forest Park will not only add to the visitor's enjoyment of its scenery, but will be essential to him if he is to wander far from the few roads to explore the wilder country that lies above them. For the features of this countryside follow no simple pattern; the hills form detached groups or rise in solitary grandeur, and the rivers that flow from them are more often separated from one another by low passes than by a high watershed that would serve as a guide to the walker. So a good map and an eye for the country are needed.

Mountains

Farewell to the mountains high, cover'd with snow;
Farewell to the straths and green valleys below;
Farewell to the forests and wild-hanging woods;
Farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring floods.

My Heart's in the Highlands

The Merrick Range

The highest and most impressive hill group in the Forest Park is that known collectively as the Merrick-Shalloch Rhinns, or Range of the Awful Hand. The reason for this picturesque title will be realised if one stands at the head of the Nick o' Balloch pass and looks south-eastwards, when four of the highest peaks assume the outline of an outstretched hand, or possibly, on another interpretation, a gigantic foot. These are Tarfessock [2280 feet], Kirriereoch [2565], The Merrick [2764], and Benyellary [2360]; Bennan, a lesser peak further south, is the thumb of the hand, and the rugged Fell of Esconchan [1142] which rises steeply above Glen Trool, is its ultimate ending. North of the 'hand' come the broad slopes of Shalloch-on-Minnoch [2520], Shalloch [1777] and Cairnadloch [1558]. The whole range stretches ten miles from north to south—ten miles of grand walking country with extensive views over the western moors and the high wilderness that lies to the east. There are steep crags and screes on Kirriereoch and the north face of The Merrick, which should be negotiated with care, but a way through will easily be found, though it may involve some scrambling. (*see Plates 3, 8, 24, 31, 39*).

The Merrick is usually climbed from Loch Trool. Close behind the Bruce Memorial a rough track will be seen running up the west side of the Buchan Burn. It is steep going at first, but one is rewarded by glimpses of the waterfalls, and a level stretch to the deserted cottage of Culsharg

The Merrick viewed from Craignaw

follows. From Culsharg, climb steeply towards the ridge on the skyline, following the burn that comes down behind the cottage. Once on the ridge, bear right for the summit of Benyellary and thence proceed along the march dyke that runs across the Saddle, or Nieve o' the Spit, to The Merrick itself. A fine return route runs via Loch Enoch, Loch Neldricken and the Murder Hole, Loch Valley, and the Gairland Burn waterfalls to Buchan Farm, where the road is regained at Buchan Bridge.

Polmaddie Hill Group

West of the main Merrick Range, at its northern end, lies the Polmaddie Hill Group, which looks so impressive as one crosses it by the Nick o' the Balloch road. The highest of these green, rounded, grassy hills is Craigenreoch [1852]; west of it lie Polmaddie Hill itself, Pinbreck Hill [1802], and Haggis Hill [1709] in Carrick Forest. To the east are Rowantree Hill [1811] and, between the Nick and the Rowantree-Straiton road, Pinbreck Hill [1636] and Eldrick Hill [1593] (*see plate 14*).

Lamachan Range

The rugged grey-brown hills immediately to the south of Loch Trool, which give so strong a Highland aspect to its scenery, are the Lamachan range. The most prominent is Mulldonach, only 1827 feet high but appearing greater on account of its steep slopes, down which Bruce's men rolled great boulders on to the advancing English in 1307. The highest hill is Lamachan [2350], whilst also prominent are Curleywee [2242] to the east and Larg Hill [2216] to the south-west; Curleywee lies just beyond the Forest Park boundary, but is freely accessible to ramblers. This group of hills, which is also known as the Minnigaff Range, extends south into

Kirroughtree Forest, forming three ridges. South-west of Larg Hill is the ridge of Black Gairy and Craigmurchie, with Loch Middle in an intervening hollow. Due south is Garlick Hill [1315] extending over Benera to Glenshalloch Hill. A little to the east, running south from Curleywee, come Bennan, Stronbae, and Black Benwee [1206] (*see plates 1, 8, 9, 26*).

The wilderness east of The Merrick

East of the Merrick Range rise a number of sizeable hills whose greatest charm is their inaccessibility. Those who tramp over them cross a trackless waste of peat bogs, winding burns, crags, and isolated lochs. In the north, two outliers of Shalloch-on-Minnoch, namely, Craigmasheenie [1796] and Shiel Hill [1665], both of which can be reached from the hill road from Craiglure Lodge to Ballochbeatties, lead on to the Waterhead Hills (around [1500]) and Craiglee [1714]. This last hill can also be approached from the east via Loch Doon and the Wee Hill o' Craigmulloch.

South of these, in Carrick just north of the Ayrshire-Kirkcudbright border, stand Castle-on-Oyne [1528], Macaterick [1637], Hoodens Hill [1790] and Mullwharchar [2270]. Mullwharchar is a fine shapely conical hill, often seen from afar yet seldom ascended, being some five miles from a road in any direction.

South of these, and in the Glen Trool forest of Kirkcudbrightshire, is a group of remarkably rugged and craggy granitic hills, all heavily glaciated and with their summits almost bare of any vegetation save grey lichens. These are Dungeon Hill and Craig Neldricken [1900 approx], Craignaw [2115] and the Buchan Hill [1600]. Strenuous walking over the wild forest of Buchan is needed to reach these peaks, which, whilst not attaining great heights themselves, give unrivalled views of the Merrick range, and the other summits that surround them (*see plates 3, 4, 19*).

The Rhinns of Kells and Cairn Edward

The great range that runs right down the eastern side of Carrick and Glen Trool Forests, touching on the Park north of New Galloway around Dundeugh and Garraries Forests, is the Rhinns of Kells. Its highest peaks, plainly visible from nearly all the Park's other summits, are Meaul [2280], the Carlin's Cairn, Corserine [2668], Millfire [2350] and Milldown (*see plate 8*).

In Clatteringshaws Forest, south-west of New Galloway, are Cairnsmore of Dee [1600] and Craignell [1500]. The great hill east of Newton Stewart, which dominates the surrounding country, is Cairnsmore of Fleet [2329].

Lochs and Rivers

The drainage system of the Forest Park is complex; the headwaters of streams flowing north to the Firth of Clyde or south to the Solway arise close together and are separated by but a slight rise in the land. Moreover, old lochs have been deepened and new ones formed to supply hydro-electric power, and streams have been so diverted that in one extreme case water that once reached the sea at Ayr must now run south to Kirkcudbright.

The Cree and its Tributaries

Let us start with the Cree, since its course is followed by the main road from Newton Stewart to Glen Trool and so will be familiar to most visitors. The Cree rises in Loch Moan, a broad sheet of water half a mile west of the Nick o' the Balloch road; it takes a tortuous course to the west, forming the westerly boundary of the Forest Park for most of the way, then bears eastwards to Bargrennan. Thence it assumes the character of a true lowland river, flowing softly between green reedy banks embowered with birch, oak and hazel, till it glides past Newton Stewart to reach its broad tide-swept estuary (*see plates 5, 10, 12, 15, 22, 26, 27, 32, 38*).

Below Bargrennan the Cree is joined by the Water of Minnoch, coming down from the Nick o' the Balloch. Minnoch is a stream without lochs, and hence given to great and sudden rises and falls. Among its interesting features are the falls of Black Linn, close to Glencaird House above the Glen Trool approach road, and the better known Minnoch Falls, now made accessible by a car park on the road itself. Farther downstream the so-called 'Roman' Bridge, a curious stone arch of unknown date—probably a mediaeval pack horse bridge, stands isolated amidst the moors between the farmsteads of Brigton and Borgan.

Between Glencaird and Holm, the Minnoch is joined by the Water of Trool, a short stream flowing down from the Loch of Trool. This loch, around whose shores lies some of the grandest scenery of the Forest Park, is a mile and a half long by a quarter of a mile wide, and includes a tiny islet called the Maiden Isle. From the Bruce Memorial, below the rugged Fell of Eschonchan on its northern shore, one may gaze across at the steep heights of Mulldonach and Curleywee, and note the site of the Battle o' the Steps o' Trool, fought between the English and the Scots under Bruce in the year 1307 (*see plates 9, 20, 24, 31, 40*).

Loch Trool is fed by three main streams. One, the Buchan Burn, comes down over waterfalls close to the Bruce Memorial, and its course is followed by the main footpath to Culsharg and the summit of the Merrick. Another, the Glenhead Burn, may be descried winding down the main valley below

woods of oak scrub; its glen provides an easy route eastwards to Loch Dee, and its headwaters are, in fact, diverted that way, just below a fine cataract, to help feed the Galloway hydro-electric power scheme; the two lochs that drain into it, the Long Loch and the Round Loch of Glenhead, lie remote and desolate amidst rugged peaty moorlands.

But it is the third, central, stream, the Gairland Burn, which flows into Loch Trool from the north-east at its eastern end, that provides the best way into the romantic wilderness of lochs and crags that forms the ancient Forest of Buchan. This stream rises on Craig Neldricken, just below, but not connected to, Loch Enoch, and flows through the strangely-shaped Loch Neldricken, famous both for its silver granite sand, which was once collected for sharpening scythes, and for the rush-bordered pool at its western end, the Murder Hole of legend and fiction. Below Loch Neldricken the water proceeds over an ancient glacial moraine by the Mid Burn to Loch Valley, a large sheet of water of irregular outline. From the east comes in a lesser stream from Loch Narroch, and alongside this lies another easy route to the headwaters of Loch Dee. Below Loch Valley the water falls by a series of cataracts to Loch Trool.

The Penkiln Burn

Near the kirk of Minnigaff the Cree is joined by the Penkiln Burn, which flows down through the policies and deer parks of Cumloden House from the wild uplands around Auchinleck. Its glen, some eight miles long, provides a convenient route to the summits of the Minnigaff Range, around Larg Hill. An eastern tributary, the Pulbae or Pulnee Burn, is followed by an old cart track leading right over the shoulders of Curleywee to Loch Dee and the Glenhead of Glen Trool.

The Palnure Burn

The tidal estuary of the Cree is joined at Palnure, three miles below Newton Stewart, by the Palnure Burn, a stream which forms, for the greater part of its course, the eastern boundary of Kirroughtree Forest, though it actually rises beside Cairn Edward Forest, farther to the north-east and close to the high road from New Galloway to Newton Stewart. Close to the prominent Murray's Monument, below the Fell of Talnotry, is the well-known Grey Mare's Tail waterfall; many visitors assume that this is the lower fall, which can be seen from the road, but it is well worth while to scramble up the steep path to the real cataract, which lies further back, near the Black Loch. Below Talnotry, the Palnure Burn is followed by the main road for three miles, after which the stream diverges southwards through the beautiful Bargaly Glen, which may be followed by by-roads and footpaths down to Palnure (*see plate 47*).

The Dee

Bennan and Dundeugh Forests lie for the most part in the basin of the River Dee, a large stream whose character has been greatly changed by the dams and diversions of the water power scheme. The headwaters of the Dee arise in a remote corner of Glen Trool Forest, near two little lochs, the Round Loch and the Long Loch of the Dungeon, which lie only a mile or two to the east of Loch Enoch and Loch Neldricken. Thence the stream, known as the Cooran Lane, meanders through peat bogs to the vicinity of Loch Dee, a broad but desolate sheet of water at the south-east corner of Glen Trool Forest. Below this loch the Black Water of Dee runs eastwards to the Clatteringshaws Loch, whose wide expanse, the haunt of many waterfowl, is entirely man-made and artificial, as is shown by the high dam above the main road. Fortunately the battlefield of Raploch Moss, on its eastern edge, where Bruce defeated an English force in 1307, remains unsubmerged. The stone beside which he stood may still be seen, and a car park gives access. It now bears the inscription:

> The Bruce's Stone:
> Upon this Moss Raploch
> Robert the Bruce,
> Earl of Crarick, Lord of the Garrioch,
> defeated the English in 1307.

The purpose of the reservoir is to store supplies at a relatively high level, so that they may be discharged downhill through a tunnel to the Glenlee power station in the Ken valley near Dalry. Consequently the River Dee below the loch is much reduced in volume; for eight miles it runs through or beside Bennan Forest, passing at length through the Stroan Loch before it joins Loch Ken at the southern end; it traverses roadless and unfenced country—a grand wilderness for the walker.

Loch Ken, which borders Bennan Forest for three miles on the east, is really the swollen course of the Water of Ken, a tributary of the Dee which has been widened and deepened by the building of a low dam at Glenlochar. The purpose of this barrage is to control the supply of water to the power station at Tongland, near the mouth of the Dee at Kirkcudbright. But the rise and fall of the water is slight, and Loch Ken forms a most attractive expanse of water, with wild swans, geese, and ducks studding its calm, clear surface, and the tree-clad slopes of Cairn Edward hill rising above it. Further north, as they fall from an elevation of 705 feet down to almost sea-level, the waters of the River Dee are used repeatedly in impressive hydro-electric works to generate power (*see plates 13, 33, 43, 44*).

The Doon

Loch Doon itself is a broad sheet of water, six miles long with an average

width of half a mile. It has been considerably enlarged and deepened by the building of two dams, one to regulate its original northern outflow through Ayrshire, and another to prevent its overflowing southwards before it has reached its maximum useful depth. One consequence of the raising of the water level was the complete submergence of the islet near the southern end, on which stood the ruins of an ancient castle; this has been preserved by being re-erected, stone by stone, on the western shore. Loch Doon, and that part of Carrick Forest which adjoins it, are best approached by the by-road that leaves the main highway a little over a mile south of Dalmellington, and crosses the head of the Ness Glen (*see plates 11, 18, 21*).

Highest of the headwaters that feed Loch Doon is the remote Loch Enoch, which is no less than 1617 feet above sea-level. The waters of Loch Enoch drain northwards by the six-mile long Eglin Lane to Loch Doon; they do not, as some maps still suggest, follow the county boundary along the Pulskaig Burn and the Gala Lane. Both routes, however, are long and arduous approaches for the walker, and Loch Enoch is usually reached from Glen Trool, either by following the Gairland Burn up through the Forest of Buchan, or by climbing The Merrick and then descending the rock-strewn slope, dropping a thousand feet in less than one mile, between the summit cairn and the waters of the Loch. This last-named approach is the most easily found and the most rewarding, for after a ridge walk with extensive views one realises the remarkable isolation of these waters amidst the untamed wastes of rock and peat, moor and crag. A unique feature of Loch Enoch is its famous 'loch-in-loch', a little pool set on an islet, its waters being at a higher level than those that surround it. This islet can only be reached by swimming the narrow strait.

No less than nine other lochs in the uplands of Carrick Forest drain into Loch Doon. The largest and most southerly is Loch Macaterick which, with its outlier Loch Fannie, has its overflow down the Black Garpel and Eglin Lanes. The Whitespout and Carrick Lanes carry the waters of Loch Riecawr and its smaller outliers—Lochs Slochy, Goosie, Ballochling, and Gower, which have recently been tapped for a public water supply scheme for the district around Ayr. North of these lochs, on the Forest Park's boundary and tapped by the Garpel Burn, lie Loch Finlas, over a mile and a half long, and its smaller outlier, the Derclach Loch. These are parted from the Loch Riecawr basin by the rough country of the aptly-named Waterhead Hills.

The Water of Girvan

To the west of the Loch Doon drainage basin lies the narrow valley of the Water of Girvan, a stream remarkable for the way in which it avoids

11 The Gala Lane, a tumultuous watercourse tumbling into the south end of Loch Doon

12 Fishing in the Caldons Burn, beside the Glen Trool camping ground

13 Bennan Hill [1249 feet] in Rhinns of Kells, Garraries Forest and Clatteringshaws Loch, seen from the approach to the Galloway Deer Museum on the New Galloway to Newton Stewart road

14 In the Water of Girvan Valley on the road north from Glen Trool through Carrick Forest to Straiton. The peaks are Craig Hill, Trostan Hill and Big Hill of the Baing

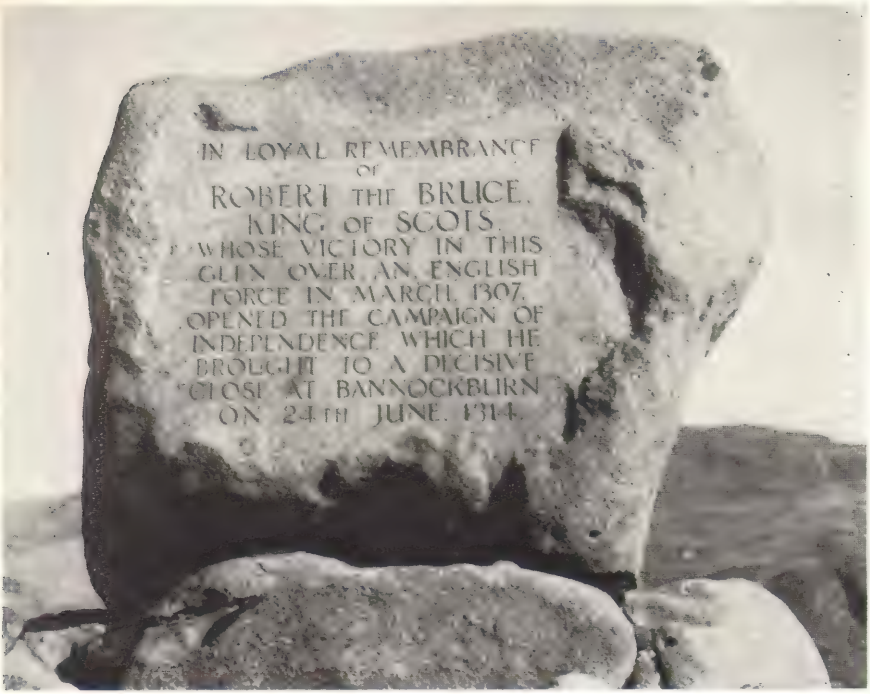
15 Ramblers on the Merrick footpath, above the Bruce Stone, following the Buchan Burn towards the summit

16 Fox cub

17 Long-tailed Wood Mouse

18 The Carrick Lane on the Loch Doon Moorlands: this stream runs east from Loch Riecawr to the south end of Loch Doon

19 Loch Enoch, with the lochan on its islet [left]. Mullwharchar Hill rises beyond



20 The Bruce Stone, Glen Trool

21 Loch Doon Castle, once situated on an islet, now rebuilt on the shore. The Rhinns of Kells, topped by Corserine [2669 feet] rise beyond, on the far eastern side of the loch

22 Falls on the Buchan Burn, flowing through a cleft in the granite rock bed, amid natural oak woods, below the Bruce Stone

being captured, so to speak, by either the Doon on its eastern flank or the Stinchar to the west. Near Craiglure Lodge hardly more than a mile divides the headwaters of the River Stinchar from those of the River Doon, and yet the Water of Girvan maintains its independent course between them. Its source is Loch Girvan Eye, fifteen hundred feet up on the flank of Craigmasheenie, and thence it runs north, through Cornish Loch and Loch Skelloch, to the broad sheet of windswept waters formed where Loch Lure has been united with Loch Bradan by the construction of a dam, to increase their joint capacity for domestic water supply for the town of Troon. Loch Bradan, as we may call the combined waters, is one and a half miles long and stands nearly a thousand feet above sea level; there are ruins of a castle on the islet in its centre, and a small plantation of spruce defies severe exposure on its south bank, where a track strikes in from the road that links Stinchar Bridge with Ballochbeatties. Loch Brecbowie, a tributary water, lies higher, to the south amidst the Waterhead Hills.

Through Loch Bradan the Water of Girvan is carried eastwards, to resume its course down a steep and narrow valley running north to the farmstead of Knockdon. There it turns west and forms the Park's northern boundary for two miles before striking northwards again. At Tairlaw Linn, a quarter of a mile to the east of Tairlaw Farm, it plunges over a cliff, deep in a tree-hung gorge, providing what is probably the Park's finest waterfall, despite its lowly setting in a pastoral valley. Near Kirkmichael it bends towards the south-west to complete its tortuous course, reaching the Firth of Clyde at Girvan (*see plate 14*).

The Stinchar

The river Stinchar (the 'ch' is soft as in 'church') rises beside the Water of Girvan high on the peaty slopes of Shalloch Hill. Flowing past Craiglure Lodge it crosses the high road and runs north-westwards, falling rapidly into a deep glen which takes a westerly course through the peaceful pastures around the farmsteads of Aldinna and North Balloch. Only two lochs feed the Stinchar, Aldinna Loch on Eldrick Hill and Linfern Loch just north of the Forest Park boundary. At the picturesque village of Barr, the Stinchar is joined by the Water of Gregg, which drains part of Carrick Forest, and then it continues south-west between green, well-farmed hills to reach the sea at Ballantrae. But its desolate upper reaches are more characteristic of the Forest Park country, and it was, no doubt, with these in mind that Burns wrote:

> Behind yon hills where Stinchar flows,
> 'Mang moors an' mosses many, O,
> The wintry sun the day has clos'd,
> And I'll awa' tae Nanie, O.

Geology

Professor G.H.J.Daysh

The seven forests comprising the Galloway Forest Park lie in an extremely attractive, if comparatively little known, part of south-west Scotland. Three of these forests are situated on the east side of the Cree, in the central drainage basin of the land of Galloway covering the western extremity of the Southern Uplands.

The geological structure of this area appears fairly simple, but in fact there is a complex distribution of the underlying strata. The basic rock types are of lower Paleozoic, chiefly Silurian, age and are sedimentaries which accumulated as a great thickness of shales, slates, greywackes, grits and conglomerates. These sediments were subjected to intense compression during the Caledonian mountain building period, and there is a well-marked north-east–south-west strike. The high degree of contortion of the strata, as the sediments were compressed into isoclinal folds, may not be readily observed in the Forest Park area, but on the coast of the Machers, as for example at the southern end of Monreith Bay, the effects are very clearly discernible. At much the same time the three well-defined granite bosses of the western portion of the Southern Uplands, the Cauldron of the Merrick area, Cairnsmore of Fleet and Criffel, were intruded, leading to extensive contact metamorphism of the sedimentaries around their borders. Two of these areas lie within or adjoining the Forest Park, and in the Merrick-Kells area in particular is the evidence of the fact that the metamorphosed shales, greywackes and grits make up most of the high country—the Merrick itself being 2764 feet, while the highest point of the Cairnsmore of Fleet is 2329 feet. In the Merrick-Kells area the metamorphosed rocks form an irregular ring round a central, lower area of granite known as the Cauldron, with its several raggedly shaped lochs of which Loch Enoch and Loch Neldricken are examples. The granite of the Cauldron area has been subject to rapid chemical attack, and in contrast with the dome of the Cairnsmore has become a fairly extensive and well marked depression, with water bodies and extensive areas of peat and bog.

Movements of the Caledonian mountain building period were not the only ones of importance to this part of Scotland. The rocks now exposed throughout the area have in the past been covered as a result of submergence by younger rocks—as for instance those of Mesozoic age. These are now hardly in evidence in this part of Scotland. Except for a small patch occurring in the Stranraer district to the west of the Forest Park area, they

The Grey Mare's Tail

have been worn away. During Tertiary times marked uplift occurred, there being probably two distinct periods of uplift with intervening large-scale peneplanation.

A most important phase in the physical history of the area was that of the Quaternary glaciation. The evidences of glacial activity are widespread and numerous. They are found in the higher areas of the Southern Uplands and in the lower lying country of the Machers of Wigtownshire. Visitors to Glen Trool Forest will be able to observe the overdeepened basin of Loch Trool, with the signs of ice-plucking along its enclosing flanks; the hanging valley of the Buchan Burn draining into Loch Trool, and the corries of the Benyellary-Merrick area. On beginning their approach to the Forest from Newton Stewart they can observe part of the drumlin belt running from Newton Stewart to Kirkcowan, and as they travel northwards will note the considerable quantities of glacial material in the lower reaches of the Minnoch. Analysis of the evidence of ice action has suggested that there were four distinct stages in the northward retreat of the ice, and much of this evidence is most clearly found in the drainage area of the River Cree.

The present drainage pattern was comparatively slightly affected by the activities of the Ice Age. The Cree and the Dee are consequent streams flowing down the dip slope of the earlier but now non-existent Mesozoic cover. The rejuvenation of these rivers as a result of uplifts during the Tertiary period has been much masked by glacial deposits, but the courses now followed by the main rivers were established before the removal of the Mesozoic strata. Tributary streams sometimes flow in, almost at right-angles,

where they follow the north-east–south-west strike of the now exposed Silurian strata. Within the Forest area many of the river courses show youthful characteristics, with numerous abrupt changes of gradient and picturesque waterfalls. Drift accumulation causes poor drainage conditions in some parts, as do true rock basins in the higher country. Greater maturity of the river courses is apparent in their lower reaches, and visitors will be able to contrast the characteristics of the Cree immediately above Newton Stewart with those, for example, of the Minnoch where they cross it to make their way to Loch Trool and into the heart of the Glen Trool Forest.

In all, the geological history of this portion of the Southern Uplands has resulted in the creation of an area of rugged and attractive topography. The approach to Newton Stewart, either from the south or by the road from New Galloway, passing the artificial lake behind the Clatteringshaws dam and following the Palnure Burn, gives opportunity to glimpse the wild beauty of the higher ridges constituting the several ranges of this much glaciated area. Equally is the special attractiveness of this area apparent in the approach from Girvan, crossing the main fault which marks the area of contrast between the geological character of the Southern Uplands and the Midland Valley of Scotland, evidenced in part by the course of the River Stinchar. Changes of level and gradient and of surface characteristics are frequent. Contrasting types of water bodies, as for instance the difference between the rock basins of Loch Trool and Loch Neldricken; differences in soil cover—some areas being virtually destitute of soil whilst others have considerable accumulations of glacial debris; resultant contrasts in the natural vegetation and in surface conditions generally; changes in the character of the rivers and streams as a direct reflection of the effects of rock structure and glacial history—all these and others contribute to the special qualities of this western portion of the Southern Uplands, and mark it off as a distinctive part of this geological unit of Scotland.

This part of south-west Scotland has no great mineral wealth, and as a result there are very few places where the extractive industries have developed. The Ordovician and Silurian rocks provide several varieties of building stone, but demands are relatively slight, and most of the Forest Park area is not easily accessible in this respect. The granite is quarried at Creetown but this does not affect the character of the forest areas. Veins in the Ordovician rocks are known to yield small quantities of minerals, e.g. lead ore, zinc, iron and copper, but workings of these have been slight and much restricted in their distribution.

The most extensive lead mines were those near Palnure at the south end

of Kirroughtree Forest, but they were closed about eighty years ago. One of the greatest resources is that of water. The several lochs and the relatively high rainfall lead to there being copious supplies of excellent water in this as in other parts of the Southern Uplands; it yields ample domestic supplies and the high levels of the lochs make it a valuable source of power.

Ask why God made the gem so small
And why so huge the granite?

Epigram on Miss Davies

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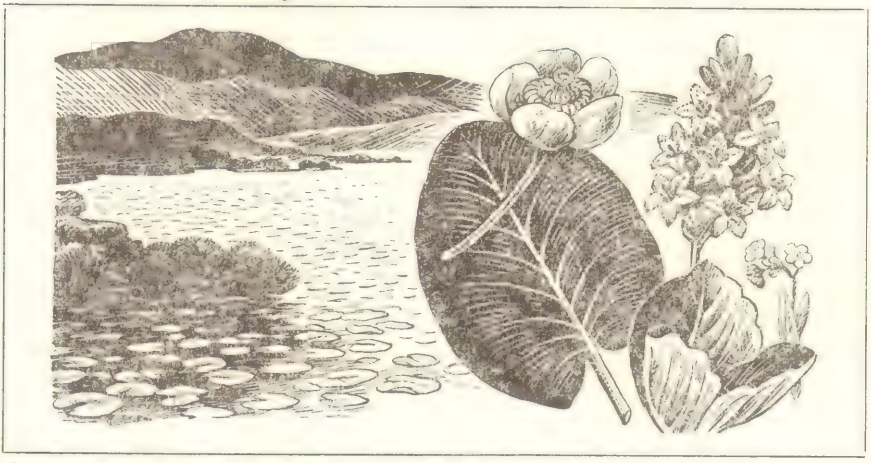
Plant Life

Professor J.R.Matthews

The several areas which comprise the Galloway Forest Park in south-western Scotland are situated mainly within the region of the 'High Moors' of Galloway, a region of much historic interest and beautiful scenery. From the botanical point of view, the term 'moor' may be employed in a descriptive sense to denote the general prevalence of a widespread grassland type of vegetation, or 'grass moor', in contrast to the heather moors so characteristic of the northern Highlands. It is due to the dominance of grassland that sheep rearing has long been one of the chief types of husbandry practised over a large part of Galloway and the Southern Uplands; indeed, the extensive grazing of sheep on the hill moorlands has been an important factor in the partial suppression of heather and, indeed, of the original forest cover. The visitor who approaches Glen Trool from Newton Stewart along the valley of the River Cree will be able to observe a good example of the transition from the agrarian belt to the region of hill pasture.

Much of this land, including all the higher ground, which rises to a maximum of 2764 feet on the Merrick, was never cultivated, but along the lower valley slopes evidence of cultivation remains, and occasionally the reversion of once-cultivated land to natural or semi-natural vegetation may be noted. In general, however, it is a grassy vegetation which clothes the valleys and mountain slopes, but there is evidence that it was not always entirely grassland or heather moor. Most of the lower hills in past times were more or less covered with forest of oak or birch, and pine was also



Yellow water lily, bog bean and forget-me-not

certainly present. Deforestation, sheep-grazing, and burning of the moorland grasses have been largely responsible for the disappearance of former forest; and although the original and vanished woodlands are being replaced, to a large degree, by trees of other kinds, the scheme of reafforestation upon which the Forestry Commission is engaged is restoring to the countryside something of its former character and interest.

The existence of former primitive woodland is proved by the recent exposure of an ancient forest of birch buried below some eighteen or twenty inches of peat at about 650–850 feet, on the valley slopes lying to the west of the Water of Minnoch and north of the High Mill Burn. There can be little doubt, therefore, that forest was once more extensive than at the present time. Fortunately, some remnants of oak and birch woods survive in different parts of Glen Trool, on the slopes of Larg Hill near Newton Stewart, and elsewhere within the Forest Park. The Wood of Cree is a further example of semi-natural woodland in which oak is the most conspicuous tree.

The Woodland Flora

These relic woodlands, though limited in area, provide a more interesting and varied flora than the extensive moorlands which lie beyond them. The commoner trees vary in frequency, but both the pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*) and the sessile oak (*Q. petraea*) occur, together with the hybrid between them. Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) are represented, while species of birch (*Betula pendula* and *B. pubescens*) are generally abundant. In damp situations, and by the sides of rivers and streams, the alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) is frequent, some of the specimens being remarkably fine. Smaller trees and shrubs are represented by gean or wild cherry (*Prunus avium*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), rowan or mountain ash (*Sorbus aucuparia*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and various willows, including the goat sallow (*Salix caprea*) and *S. atrocinerea*. The commonest climber is the ivy (*Hedera helix*), but honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*) also occurs. Of the plants which form the undergrowth in these woods, various grasses are conspicuous, such as the soft grass (*Holcus mollis*), sweet vernal grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*) and fine bent (*Agrostis tenuis*), while wetter places generally provide large tussocks of purple moor grass (*Molinia caerulea*). The uneven carpet of mosses include species of *Hylocomium*, *Hypnum*, *Dicranum*, and *Polytrichum*, but in wet hollows these are replaced by bog mosses (*Sphagnum*), with which the marsh violet (*Viola palustris*), marsh thistle (*Cirsium palustre*) and rush (*Juncus effusus*) are frequently associated. Accompanying the mosses on the drier and better drained slopes, the wood sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*) appears in

profusion, while the heath bedstraw (*Galium saxatile*), tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*), wood violet (*Viola riviniana*) and common speedwell (*Veronica officinalis*) are locally abundant. Other woodland species worthy of mention are the yellow pimpernel (*Lysimachia nemorum*), self-heal (*Prunella vulgaris*), bugle flower (*Ajuga reptans*), ground ivy (*Nepeta hederacea*), devil's bit scabious (*Scabiosa succisa*), golden rod (*Solidago virgaurea*), herb robert (*Geranium robertianum*) and, especially on dry stony banks, the wood sage (*Teucrium scorodonia*). Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*), primrose (*Primula vulgaris*) and wild hyacinth (*Endymion non-scripta*) are not widely distributed in these old woods of the Forest Park, though they occur in some of them; the cow-wheat (*Melampyrum pratense*), partially parasitic on the roots of grasses, is found in the wood at Caldons, not far from the camping site in Glen Trool.

No account of the woodland plants would be complete, however, without reference to the ferns which add to the adornment of the undergrowth. The bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*), whose pale green fronds change eventually to a rich russet brown, is everywhere abundant and often luxuriant. This is true also of other ferns, since the mild climate, heavy rainfall and cloudiness of the region are favourable to their growth and development. Among the commoner species are the male fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*) and its ally *D. spinulosa*, the scented fern (*Lastraea montana*), and the lady fern (*Athyrium filix-foemina*), all of which frequently contribute to the vegetation which fringes the sides of ditches. The hard fern (*Blechnum spicant*) is widely distributed, but much more local is the beech fern (*Phegopteris polypodioides*). Other species are likewise restricted because of their peculiar habitat, but a search of old walls will almost certainly be rewarded by the finding of the common polypody (*Polypodium vulgare*), the wallrue (*Asplenium ruta-muraria*) and the black spleenwort (*A. trichomanes*). Of rare occurrence are the sea spleenwort (*A. marinum*) and the curious rustyback or scaly fern (*Ceterach officinarum*).

An isolated narrow strip of woodland deserves special mention; it lies between the main road and the shore of Loch Ken on the eastern boundary of Bennan Forest. Alder and birch are the prevailing trees, with a fringe of willows by the water's edge. The wet, peaty soil supports a considerable shrubby undergrowth of sweet gale (*Myrica gale*), associated with other moisture-demanding plants, such as jointed rush (*Juncus articulatus*), dropwort (*Oenanthe crocata*), angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*), valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*), meadow sweet (*Spiraea ulmaria*), sneezewort (*Achillea ptarmica*), water mint (*Mentha aquatica*), marsh bird's foot trefoil (*Lotus uliginosus*) and bog asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*). This assemblage of the alder wood is quite different from that of the oak-birch woods, although a

few species, including marsh violet, bugle flower, devil's bit scabious and several ferns are common to both types of woodland.

Plants of Moor and Bog

When we emerge from the woodland communities with their varied flora, a different and a more monotonous vegetation meets the eye. Great stretches of 'grass moor' form a conspicuous feature of much of the Forest Park area. Along the valleys and covering the lower slopes, a deposit of peat of varying thickness has accumulated on top of the mineral soil and even at considerable altitudes extensive flats or glacial hollows are covered with peat. On this substratum the 'grass moors' have developed, the characteristic plant being the purple moor grass (*Molinia caerulea*). In many areas this widespread grass dominates the scene. The most conspicuous of its associates is sweet gale or bog myrtle (*Myrica gale*), which locally becomes very abundant; while the bog asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*), deer grass (*Eriophorum caespitosum*), cross-leaved heath (*Erica tetralix*), and heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) are almost invariably present. In some areas the deer grass predominates. Where drainage is impeded, and conditions are favourable for the development of bog, species of bog-moss (*Sphagnum*) become a conspicuous feature. It is here that the cotton grass (*Trichophorum*) appears, with the white beak-rush (*Rynchospora alba*) as an occasional associate; and on scattered hummocks throughout the bog, heather, tormentil, crowberry (*Empetrum nigrum*) and heath rush (*Juncus squarrosus*) often establish themselves. But the bog flora may be more varied, depending to some extent on the amount of drainage. An interesting community is represented in a small fan-shaped bog, intersected by numerous drainage channels, on gently sloping ground just above Buchan farm in Glen Trool. The commonest plant of the channels is the lesser jointed rush (*Juncus bulbosus*) with its flowers often replaced by vegetative buds. More or less submerged also is the bog St. John's wort (*Hypericum elodes*), and scattered here and there are plants of the umbellifer (*Carum verticillatum*). Beyond the water channels large yellow cushions of bog moss are tinted red with abundant rosettes of the sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*), often associated with the bright green leaves of pennywort (*Hydrocotyle vulgaris*). The many-stemmed club-rush (*Eleocharis multicaulis*) is frequent and sedges are represented by *Carex pulicaris*, *C.echinata* and *C. flava*. The insectivorous butterwort (*Pinguicula vulgaris*), grows in the vicinity.

Our native insectivorous plants are always a source of interest, and visitors who botanise in Kirroughtree Forest will find both sundew and butterwort in great profusion by the main road near Murray's Monument. Here an outcrop of rock provides an unusual number of plants within a

small area, including Grass of Parnassus (*Parnassia palustris*), purging flax (*Linum catharticum*), sea plantain (*Plantago maritima*), and *Selaginella selaginoides*.

The abundance of bracken in the woodland undergrowth has already been mentioned, and in the Forest Park, as elsewhere, this common fern, which may originally have been a woodland species, has invaded the hills. Its steady encroachment to beyond 1000 feet on the steeper and drier slopes is a menace to the sheep farmer, for it usurps the place of the more valuable hill pasture; and not infrequently it invades the rocky slopes where the fine-leaved heath (*Erica cinerea*) and heather were once the most conspicuous occupants. These upland pastures are a brighter green than the grass moors of the deeper and wetter peat. They comprise grasses such as bent (*Agrostis tenuis*), sheep's fescue (*Festuca ovina*), sweet vernal grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*) hair grass (*Deschampsia flexuosa*), and mat-grass (*Nardus stricta*); but are characterised also by the presence of tormentil, heath bedstraw, self-heal, milkwort (*Polygala vulgaris*), and occasional colonies of eyebright (*Euphrasia officinalis*) and lousewort (*Pedicularis sylvatica*). The harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*) is not infrequent, and a colourful feature is sometimes provided by the beautiful mountain pansy (*Viola lutea*) or its variety *amoena*.

Mountain Plants

At altitudes higher than the main belt of hill pasture, the more characteristic mountain plants begin to appear. Both to the climber and to the botanist in search of hill plants, The Merrick [2764 feet] is likely to provide a centre of attraction. The approach along the Buchan Burn and by way of Culsharg Glen takes one over a long stretch of *Molinia* and *Eriophorum* moor, but when steeper slopes are reached at about 1500 feet, a change in the vegetation is noticeable. Purple moor grass (*Molinia*) is less ubiquitous, and bent (*Agrostis tenuis*), fescue (*Festuca ovina*), and its variety *vivipara*, become more prominent, with matgrass (*Nardus stricta*) locally dominant. Conspicuous patches of heather (*Calluna*) and *Erica cinerea* appear, and isolated plants of the green-ribbed sedge (*Carex binervis*) stand out above the general herbage. The numerous boulders strewn over the hillside bear grey growths of lichen and dark-coloured patches of the moss *Andraea petrophila*. On some of the more precipitous rock faces, the dwarf juniper (*Juniperus nanus*) seems to hold on precariously, and the screes provide the parsley fern (*Cryptogramma crispa*). The starry saxifrage (*Saxifraga stellaris*) is restricted to moist situations beside streams or springs, and as the high ridge of the corrie is reached other alpine plants make their appearance. These include the cowberry (*Vaccinium vitis-idaea*), crowberry

(*Empetrum nigrum*), the smallest of our native willows (*Salix herbacea*), the mountain sedge (*Carex rigida*), and the clubmosses *Lycopodium alpinum* and *L. selago*. Exposure to strong winds has a markedly dwarfing effect on these mountain plants, an effect which is even more striking in the case of some common lowland species which have gained a foothold on the higher summits. The familiar bent grass (*Agrostis tenuis*) appears in an unusual form when no more than two or three inches high, while the heath bedstraw (*Galium saxatile*), tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*), and blaeberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*) become remarkably small and prostrate. Associated with these plants, the grey woolly moss (*Rhacomitrium*) is everywhere abundant and appears in an increasingly prominent role as the summit of The Merrick is reached.

Plants of Loch and Stream

A glance at the map will show that The Merrick occupies an almost central position in the combined area of Glen Trool and Carrick Forests, dominating a region both wild and magnificent, which owes much of its scenic beauty to the presence of numerous irregular and ragged lochs. In most cases the rocky shores of these lochs have prevented any extensive development of marginal swamps, though occasional clumps of the common reed (*Phragmites communis*) are found near the western end of Loch Trool, while larger colonies of bladder sedge (*Carex ampullacea*) and water horse-tail (*Equisetum limosum*) appear elsewhere. These sub-aquatic plants, whose shoots emerge above the surface of the water, may be accompanied by others with floating or completely submerged leaves. The yellow water-lily (*Nuphar lutea*) and water lobelia (*Lobelia dortmanna*) are characteristic of these highland lochs, and the floating bur-reed (*Sparganium minimum*) provides an added interest. Various species of pondweed (*Potamogeton*) are represented, and shoreweed (*Littorella lacustris*) is relatively common. Bog bean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*) and marsh cinquefoil (*Comarum palustre*) are not infrequent, and sluggish stretches of some of the streams and rivers provide water milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) and water starwort (*Callitriche intermedia*).

In a brief account of the flora of the Forest Park, it has not been possible to refer to all the species which may be found, but enough has been said to indicate the main types of plant communities and the species which comprise them. It is hoped that visitors who explore the Forest area will find interest and pleasure in the wild plants 'that bloom by mountain streamlets mid the heather' and that every effort will be made to conserve the native flora.

Wild Animals and Birds

E.Langley Roberts

Naturalists who have explored the Solway coast and its mountainous hinterland—the country we call Galloway—are almost unanimous in their appraisal of it as an area so rich in wildlife as to be virtually unmatched elsewhere in Britain. Few, if any, visitors to the Galloway Forest Park will find cause to disagree. Situated in the heart of the wild Galloway uplands, the Park boasts flora and fauna which are typically Highland, yet being uninfluenced by the climatic severity of the Highlands proper, it retains also many species typical of more southerly latitudes.

Nature never stands still. Changes in habitat are reflected in a changing pattern of wildlife, and nowhere is this more apparent than in the hill country of Galloway. Heavily wooded in prehistoric times, its deforestation was virtually complete 200 years ago, firstly due to cultivation and later through sheep-grazing and grass burning. Typical woodland animals and birds—pine marten, wild boar, capercaillie and kite—vanished with the trees and their places were filled by the wild creatures of what we like to think of as the 'natural' open moorland—blue hare, red grouse, golden plover and merlin, though one animal which has adapted to the change is the red deer.

Now the forest has come back, and in the space of only a few decades has brought with it swift and dramatic changes to the wild life of the hills. In the fastnesses of the Galloway Forest Park we may now enjoy the best of both worlds, for it is here that the creatures of the open hill country go cheek by jowl with the wildlife of the woods. Where else, indeed, could one hear the green woodpecker call out in alarm as the shadow of a hunting eagle passes over the trees?

No fewer than eleven species of birds of prey, including four owls, breed in the Park, among them the golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaëtos*). Absent for many years from its old Galloway haunts—Benyellary, from the Gaelic *Beinn iolaire*, 'hill of the eagle', speaks for itself—a pair returned to nest in what is now the Galloway Forest Park soon after the Second World War. Three pairs now breed annually in Galloway, two of them within the Park, and for some years a fourth pair nested until the female lost her mate and disappeared. There can be little doubt that the recent nesting of golden eagles in the Lake District is attributable to an overspill of Galloway birds.

Eagles need a large hunting territory and it is doubtful whether Galloway could support more than five or six pairs at the most. They are also shy birds which readily desert their eggs, and in recent years the

Galloway eagles have suffered many breeding failures due to human disturbance of one kind or another. It is sincerely to be hoped that visitors will co-operate by keeping away from known breeding sites so that all may continue to enjoy the unforgettable sight of Britain's most majestic bird of prey sailing on great broad wings high over the forests.

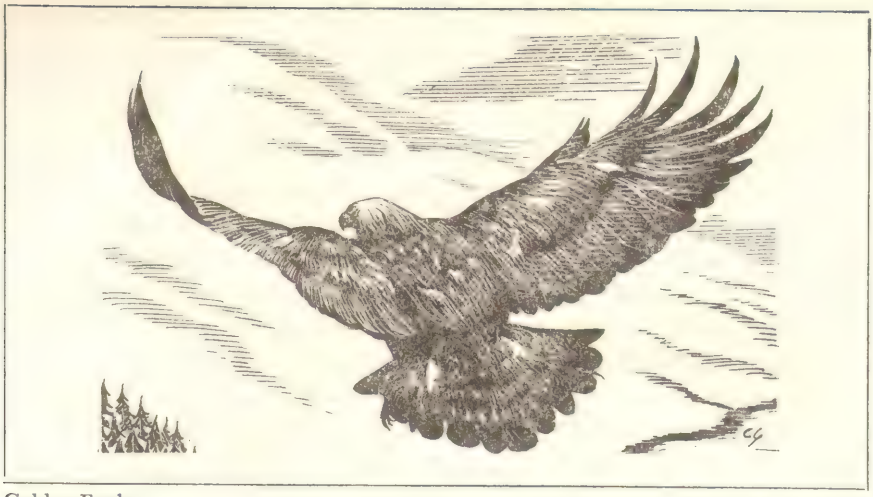
Another lost bird of prey which returned to Galloway after an absence of more than 100 years is the hen harrier (*Circus cyaneus*). A pair bred successfully on open moorland in 1960 and again in 1961. In the following year a second pair nested in the forest near the southernmost edge of the Park, and by 1965 offspring of the earlier breeding pairs were nesting in other parts of the Galloway forests, including the Park. Today the hen harrier, undoubtedly attracted to the young plantations by the abundant small bird life they support, has become quite a common breeding bird hereabouts. There is also, just on the border of the Forest Park, a great open 'flow' which in winter is used by up to thirty hen harriers as a communal roost. It is indeed an unforgettable experience to see these great birds of prey coming in over the forest from all directions in the afterglow of a Galloway sunset.

The story of the peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) is much less happy. Perhaps as many as twenty pairs bred in the Galloway hills in the years following the Second World War. Then in 1961 a nation-wide survey of the species revealed an alarming decline in numbers, subsequently attributed to prey contamination by pesticides, and in common with most other areas, the Galloway peregrine population was found to be drastically reduced.

Following a ban placed upon the use of certain pesticides, the peregrine decline was arrested just in time, and though no dramatic recovery has taken place this splendid bird, rated as one of the fastest fliers in the world, is at least holding its own in Galloway. Several pairs now breed annually within the boundaries of the Park, usually on some quite inaccessible crag well away from the haunts of man.

Strangely enough the merlin (*Falco columbarius*) did not appear to suffer to anything like the same extent as its near-relative, though it, too, lives upon small birds. It is still a fairly common breeding bird of the Forest Park. Its normal breeding habitat is open heathery moorland, but as more and more of this becomes covered by the young plantations, it is managing to hold its own by moving up to the rocky hillsides above the treeline.

Both kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*) and buzzard (*Buteo buteo*) are common birds of the Park. The former usually nests on high crags but also occasionally in the old nests of carrion crows (*Corvus corone*), while the latter finds ample breeding sites in the tall mature timber. Neither species, however, seems likely to increase, and there is evidence that buzzards are



Golden Eagle

decreasing in the forests. Both birds feed by spotting their prey on the ground, and the increasing tree cover is bound to affect their hunting. Moreover, the buzzard, like the raven (*Corvus corax*), another familiar bird of the Park, is fond of sheep carrion, and with the clearance of sheep from potential planting areas these birds are likely to decrease further.

The sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*), on the other hand, is probably more plentiful in the forests of south-west Scotland than anywhere else in Britain. Coniferous woodland is ideally suited to its needs and though it suffered badly in the south as a result of pesticides, it has more than held its own in Galloway. For several years a goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) overwintered in Fleet Forest near the southern limits of the Park, and other examples have been recorded from time to time in various parts of Galloway.

Four species of owls are to be found in the Park. The tawny owl (*Strix aluco*) is quite common, having apparently accepted the dense coniferous woods which are even more ideally suited to the long-eared owl (*Asio otus*). In many places the long-eared is the commonest owl, being especially numerous in Kirroughtree Forest. The short-eared owl (*Asio flammeus*), though primarily a bird of open country, has increased since the establishment of the forests, attracted like the hen harrier to the young plantations where it may be seen hunting at all times of the year. Barn owls (*Tyto alba*) are today decreasing everywhere but may still be seen in the Forest Park where they breed and roost in some of the old abandoned crofts among the trees.

There can be no doubt that the Galloway Forest Park has attracted a number of species which otherwise would be quite unknown in the district. A variety of warblers—blackcaps (*Sylvia atricapilla*), whitethroats

(*S. communis*), chiffchaffs (*Phylloscopus collybita*) and willow warblers (*Ph. trochilus*)—fill the plantations with spring song, while the grasshopper warbler (*Locustella naevia*), whose nest is said to be one of the most difficult of all to find, breeds among the very young trees.

Six of the seven species of British breeding titmice—great tit (*Parus major*), blue tit (*P. caeruleus*), coal tit (*P. ater*), marsh tit (*P. palustris*), willow tit (*P. montanus*) and long-tailed tit (*Aegithalos caudatus*)—are common throughout the Park and all nest. The goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*), Britain's smallest bird, is abundant in the mature coniferous forest the year round. There is no more charming sight than that of a family of these tiny green birds, orange crests aflame, swinging high among the spruce needles on a clear frosty winter's day. Local people call the goldcrest the 'basket-hanger' because it suspends its neat little nest of moss beneath the very tip of a high fir branch.

Closely associated with coniferous woodland, the crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*) has returned to the new forests of south-west Scotland and in some places now breeds regularly. Their numbers are augmented in winter by immigrant birds from Scandinavia, and crossbills may sometimes be seen feeding on the seeds contained in the cones of the more mature pines.

One of the most colourful small birds of the Park is the bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*), to my mind the loveliest of all the finches. They like the cover of the plantations and usually nest in spruces about ten to fifteen years old. In the forest they appear to feed mainly upon weed seeds, rowan berries, blaeberries and the buds of deciduous scrub. They feed their young on caterpillars, and like the tits and warblers, perform a useful service by destroying the larvae of that scourge of the forests, the sawfly.

It is mainly to the younger plantations that the great grey shrike (*Lanius excubitor*) comes in winter, a handsome visitor from the great forests of Scandinavia. It is easy to see for it habitually perches on the topmost point of a conifer, taking its prey from the ground in a long, graceful swoop, thence returning immediately to its perch, or else setting off in swift pursuit of some luckless small bird that it has espied from its lookout post.

Late on summer evenings when the sun has dropped behind Lamachan Hill and the woods begin to rustle with night life, a strange purring trill sounds through Bennan Forest. It is the song of the nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*), that mysterious bird of the twilight, subject of legend and superstition, to which such descriptive and picturesque names as 'flax-spinning wheel', 'moth owl' and 'dew-fall hawk' have been applied by country people. The nightjar undoubtedly came in with the forests, and those who care to wait up late may glimpse its ghostly form beating silently along the rides between the trees, hunting nocturnal insects.

Undoubtedly one of the most exciting ornithological events of recent years has been the spread into southern Scotland of the green woodpecker (*Picus viridis*), a species formerly confined to wooded country south of the Border. It first bred in Scotland in the Lothians in 1957 and only three years later appeared in Bennan Forest where it has bred every year since in the old oaks that have been left standing among the new plantations. The species is slowly increasing throughout the south of Scotland and has already been reported as breeding in other parts of Galloway Forest Park.

Pheasants (*Phasianus colchicus*) abound in many plantations, and among the attractions of the Park are the golden and Lady Amherst pheasants of Kirroughtree Forest, where these highly decorative birds, including some very beautiful crosses, may often be seen feeding beside the main road.

Among the gamebirds red grouse (*Lagopus lagopus*) are still fairly common on open moorland and in the very young plantations, but their place is gradually being taken by blackgame (*Lyrurus tetrix*) which prefer the fringes of the more mature forest. These birds are increasing, at least temporarily, and some very fine 'leks', as the communal courtship displays are called, can be observed in the early mornings and late evenings of April and May.

The last known haunt of the ptarmigan (*Lagopus mutus*) in Galloway was the summit plateau of Lamachan Hill, but 130 years have gone by since these southern hills saw the flash of its snow-white wings.

By way of compensation the black-throated diver (*Gavia arctica*) previously unkown south of the Highlands, has in the past eight or ten years spread into southern Scotland, and at least one pair nests annually on one or other of the lonely hill lochans of the Forest Park.

The Park abounds with tumbling streams where the dipper (*Cinclus cinclus*) bobs on spray-drenched stones and the lovely grey wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*) nests in the mossy rock face above the torrent. One may follow the burn upstream, mounting boulder-strewn hillsides where the ring-ousel (*Turdus torquatus*) scolds harshly at one's intrusion, climbing onwards to the highest tops to hear the mournful whistle of the golden plover (*Charadrius apricarius*) sounding across bleak plateaux where, well within the present century, the dotterel (*Charadrius morinellus*) has nested and indeed may still occasionally do so undetected, for this is a lonely land, frequented only by the hill shepherd.

Or one may prefer to follow the water downstream, exploring gravelly bays where oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) and ringed plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*) nest among the stones and common sandpipers (*Tringa hypoleucos*) flick their tails nervously at one's approach. In the lower reaches, flanked by heathery bogland where curlew (*Numenius arquata*) call hauntingly and dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) hide their nests cunningly among

23 Young red deer stag

24 Plantations on the rugged Rig of Stroan, seen across Loch Trool from the camp site at Caldons

25 Campers at Caldons camping ground, with tents pitched among the oakwoods

26 Looking east from the head of Loch Trool towards the native woods of sessile oak beside the Glenhead Burn. Curleywee and Bennanbrack hills rise beyond

27 Falls on the Gairland Burn near the Bruce Stone in the Glen Trool oakwoods

28 Sparrow Hawk in pine tree

29 Hen curlew brooding her eggs

30 The Changue plantations near Barr in the Stinchar Valley, Carrick Forest

31 View east up Loch Trool from Caldons camping ground. Fell of Eschoncan left, Buchan Hill centre

32 Newton Stewart weir and bridge on the River Cree, and the village of Minnigaff beyond

33 The dam that holds back Clatteringshaws Loch, and the bridge over the Black Water o' Dee, on the Newton Stewart to New Galloway road

34 Eastward view from the Bruce Stone, over Buchan Farm and the rugged Glen Trool uplands; a glaciated rockscape. In the centre the Gairland Burn rushes down from the Rig o' the Jarkness, with Craiglee Hill beyond

35 Westward view from the Bruce Stone down Loch Trool – *Loch an t' Struthail*, the winding loch

the tussocks, one may glimpse the lovely drake goosander (*Mergus merganser*) fishing a quiet pool. A hundred years ago this species had never been known to nest in Britain, and it spread south into Galloway only within the past 30 years. It is now a widespread breeding bird of the forest country.

No account of the birds of Galloway would be complete without reference to its winter wildfowl population. Enthusiasts from all over Britain visit the area to partake of what can only be described as an ornithological feast. All nine species of regular British wintering geese have been recorded in recent years in the Dee Valley below Loch Ken, and of course the neighbouring Solway Firth is famous for its large concentrations of pink-footed (*Anser brachyrhynchus*), greylag (*A. anser*) and barnacle geese (*Branta leucopsis*).

Lower Loch Ken is noted as the winter haunt of Britain's largest flock of bean geese (*Anser arvensis*) which sometimes number up to 100, and of a large concentration of Greenland white-fronted geese (*A. albifrons*), some of which frequently roost on Loch Stroan in Bennan Forest. Loch Ken and the Dee are also the haunts of wild whooper swans (*Cygnus cygnus*), Bewick's swan (*C. bewickii*) and of countless ducks which have flooded in from the inhospitable north—mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), teal (*A. crecca*), pintail (*A. acuta*), shoveler (*Spatula clypeata*), gadwall (*Anas strepera*), goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*) and great packs of wigeon (*Anas penelope*) that whistle musically overhead in the night sky.

The National Trust's Threave Wildfowl Refuge nearby affords the visitor splendid views of these and other species of wildfowl. On a single winter's day I personally have seen 15 species of ducks in the lower Loch Ken area.

The Galloway Forest Park contains not only Britain's largest wild birds but its largest wild mammals as well, for here the noble red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) is truly 'the monarch of the glen'. Herds totalling at least 500 populate the Galloway uplands, though the native red deer became extinct in the mid-18th century. The present animals are descendants of those reintroduced sometime during the 19th century. Galloway heads are said to be often recognisable by the bifurcating back tines of the antlers due, it is claimed, to the infusion of a wapiti strain from North American deer introduced at one time into Cumloden Deer Parks near Newton Stewart.

Some fine roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*) heads have been recorded from Galloway, where these animals are common in the Forest Park and elsewhere. They are capable of causing considerable damage to young trees by stripping the bark to mark their 'territories', and the 'high seats'—tall wooden platforms—that the visitor will see in some of the plantations are built for the purpose of controlling roe deer by shooting.

A visit to the Forestry Commission's Deer Museum at Clatteringshaws will be found most instructive.

The visitor to Galloway is often surprised to find apparently wild goats roaming the hills. Despite the fearsome curving horns of the billies these animals are timid and retiring (though one or two canny old characters in Glen Trool have apparently learned that the visitor is often good for tit-bits in return for a photographic pose!) and to all intents and purposes are wild.

They are however descended from domestic stock which went feral probably with the clearance of the crofts in the early 19th century. It is believed also that some goats were later introduced to the high ground to the south of Loch Macaterick in order to keep off sheep and improve the grazing for red deer. The Forestry Commission has recently set aside an enclosure containing a herd of these wild goats beside the main road from Newton Stewart to New Galloway, near Murray's Monument.

Foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*) are common in Galloway and those seen in the Park are often of the variety known as the 'hill fox', a somewhat larger, longer-legged animal that makes its den up among the boulders. Badgers (*Meles meles*) are to be found in some types of ground though they dislike the peat and occur more usually in well-drained, more sandy situations. Otters (*Lutra lutra*) being very nocturnal and seldom seen, are more common than might be supposed, and a silent vigil in the twilight beside some slow-moving forest stream will occasionally be rewarded by the sight of a sleek flat head cleaving the surface of the water as the otter sets out upon its nightly hunt.

Both British species of hares occur in the Park, though the blue or mountain hare (*Lepus timidus*) is probably more common, and certainly so in winter, than the familiar brown hare (*L. capensis*) of the lowlands. The mountain hare, like the local stoats (*Mustela erminea*) usually turns completely white in winter. It can be recognised at other times by its longer hind legs, shorter ears and darker coat which has a distinctly bluish tinge.

There are, of course, many other birds and mammals to be seen in the Park, but in this brief account I have tried to concentrate on the species which will be of particular interest to those who come to discover the peculiar charm of Galloway and its forests.

The thummart, wulcat, brock and tod,
Weel kenn'd his voice through a' the wood,
He smelt their ilka hole and road
Baith in and out,
And weel he liked to shed their bluid,
And sell their skin.
The Twa Herds

Thummart - foumart or polecat
Tod - fox
Brock - badger

Forests and Plantations

Hugh V.S.Dier

The Galloway Forest Park is comprised of the seven forests of Bennan, Carrick, Clatteringshaws, Dundeugh, Garraries, Glen Trool and Kirroughtree, which together form a compact block in the north-western corner of the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright and southern Ayrshire. It covers an area of some 155,000 acres and close by are a further 31,000 acres of forest land in parts of Bennan, Clatteringshaws, Dundeugh and in the forests of Fleet and Penninghame.

The two largest forests in the Park are Glen Trool with 54,000 acres gross of which 28,000 acres have been planted and Carrick totalling 41,000 of which 17,000 acres are now under trees. The planted area within the Park amounts to 83,000 acres with a further 12,500 acres available for planting in the near future. The first planting took place at Bennan Forest in 1922 beside the shores of Loch Ken. Scots pine, European larch, Douglas fir, Norway and Sitka spruces were the main trees used. Growth of these early plantations has been very irregular due to the great variability of soil and terrain, the insufficiency of ground preparation before planting and the effects of browsing by rabbits, hares and deer. A disastrous fire in 1926, which destroyed more than a hundred acres of young trees, and its subsequent replanting, further contributed to the irregular mosaic of tree species and crown texture which characterises this part of the forest.

Planting the Young Trees

In the early years planting was done on virtually undisturbed soil. A cut was made with a spade, another one at right angles and the plant was slipped into the intersection of the two cuts, termed an 'L' notch. The soil was then trodden firmly around the root collar. Wet areas were usually left unplanted; where planting was done on wet land the young trees frequently became waterlogged and stagnated or died.

About 1928 a system of turf planting, known as the Belgian turf method, was introduced from Europe. This rendered the planting of wet and boggy ground much more certain of success. Drains were cut by hand in a herring bone pattern at intervals of from twenty to twenty-two feet apart, and the turves from these were spread from five to six feet apart between the drains. An 'L' notch was then made in each turf and the plant threaded through so that its roots were spread out in the sandwich between the turf and the ground.

The Belgian turf method in turn has been superseded by ploughing and

draining carried out by massive hill ploughs powered by crawler tractors and current techniques are constantly being developed. Improvements, which have been largely dictated by the shortage and high cost of labour, are aimed at taking the drudgery out of forest work. To this end it is necessary to mechanise as far as possible all operations which have hitherto called for heavy manual toil. Although one of the objects of ploughing is to cultivate tough compacted soils, and there are in fact limited areas of these in the Forest Park, the prime purpose in this western region is to improve the drainage and aeration of wetlands and provide a large bulk of upturned soil on which to plant. Since two-thirds of the ground being planted here is covered by peat of varying depth it follows that large areas would have to be left unplanted if they were not ploughed.

Over the past five years the area planted annually in the Forest Park has dropped from nearly 5000 to less than 2500 acres. Two of the seven constituent forests no longer play a part since they have been planted up and other forests will progressively fall out until afforestation virtually comes to an end about 1980. By that time some of the older plantations will be ripe for clear felling and subsequent replanting, and the cycle will begin again, but at a slower tempo than the first time round.

Almost all the young trees planted have come from the three forest nurseries established in close proximity to the Forest Park. One, indeed, at Kirroughtree lies within the Park itself. Bareagle, Kirroughtree and Fleet nurseries between them cover 109 acres and constantly carry stocks of more than twenty-six million seedlings and sixteen million small transplanted trees with a value of some £62,000. Each year they send out fifteen million 'transplants' for planting throughout the south of Scotland, including three to four million for the Forest Park itself.

Felling and Planting

In common with all forest operations nursery work has undergone radical changes during the last decade or so. The basic principles remain unchanged; the land is maintained in good heart by rotational cropping, including one year under greencrop when soil nutrient deficiencies are made good with suitable chemicals. Seed is sown each spring on well prepared beds, and the seedlings are carefully lifted and transplanted when one or two years old. The transplants are put out to the forest when of the right size, from nine to eighteen inches high. Seedlings and transplants are constantly protected from weeds, damage and disease. But the tools and techniques now employed are very different from the traditional ones used years ago. Hand tools such as the spade, the fork and the rake have almost disappeared. Cultivation and preparation of good soil tilth are now carried out by tractors pulling appropriate equipment such as ploughs and harrows. Transplanting is now done by a transplanting machine which carries a gang of six workers who feed the seedlings into clips on revolving discs. Weeding is no longer carried out by large squads of seasonal workers crawling on their hands and knees but instead the weeds are inhibited from germinating, or else killed, by chemical sprays applied from tractor-drawn machines. Even the transplants may not go direct to the planting forests for they can be stored for several months in a dormant condition in the cold store at Kirroughtree nursery, in this way the planting season can be extended beyond the normal limits of the spring months.

Despite the presence of native broadleaved trees, poor in timber quality but great in beauty, in the valley bottoms and along the banks of mountain streams, the soils and climate of the Forest Park are best suited to the growing of coniferous trees when timber production is the aim. Since each kind of tree has its own special requirements in terms of habitat it follows that within a region of such great variety and contrast there is scope for an equally great variety of trees. Many sorts of conifer have indeed been tried and have succeeded. Because there is but one native conifer of economic importance, the Scots pine, most of the major plantings have been done with other kinds introduced from overseas and mainly from North Western America.

Until the introduction of hill ploughing, chemical weed control and the broadcast application of fertilisers, the existing ground conditions, as evidenced by the natural vegetation, largely determined the choice of species to plant. Modern techniques of ground preparation tend to iron out inequalities of site and make it possible to concentrate upon one or two kinds best calculated to give the maximum return. So it follows that species such as Sitka spruce have played an ever increasing part in the afforestation of the Forest Park. But it is also true to say that with the

currently increasing regard for other aspects of forestry besides timber production alone, namely the need to provide for amenity, recreation and conservation, more regard is being paid to providing a varied texture of woodland in those places where these demands are most important.

Many kinds of Conifers

In the earlier plantings Scots pine figured more prominently that it has of late, for its growth and timber yields have proved disappointing. Notwithstanding, it has a special place on dry heather-covered ground. With its bluish-green foliage and in later life its broad mushroom-shaped crown, it lends especial beauty to roadside knolls and banks. Planted in this fashion it figures in relatively small areas throughout the Forest Park.

European larch from the Alps and eastern Europe, has also been disappointing on the whole and much less is planted now than formerly. Yet given the right conditions of soil, slope and aspect it can grow into a magnificent tree of great beauty and with timber of very high value. Perhaps the secret is to plant it only where conditions are prime for its success rather than to plant it across a whole hillside. When planted in smallish irregular groups through a matrix of darker evergreen conifers it will lend beauty to what might otherwise be a monotonous expanse of unvaried green, both in the winter with its straw-coloured twigs and boles, and in the spring with its fresh livery of tender green.

Japanese larch is more vigorous and coarser growing but less demanding as regards site. It, too, sheds its needles and with stems of a rich, dark, purple-brown, lends beauty to our winter woodlands. The plantations of Kirroughtree Forest overlooking Newton Stewart, the slopes of Bennan Forest above Loch Ken, the banks below Loch Trool and the northern escarpment and gorges of Carrick Forest owe much of their loveliness to Japanese larch.

Douglas fir, from British Columbia, will only thrive in rather special conditions but has done well where its requirements have been met. It has grown outstandingly at Bennan Forest, beside Loch Ken. Here some of the earliest crops, now fifty years old, contain magnificent trees more than a hundred feet tall, ideal for telegraph poles and sawlogs.

Norway spruce was formerly planted much more extensively than it is now, for it has given place to Sitka spruce which is more vigorous, more productive of timber and less demanding of good soil. Some of the best specimen trees grow on Bennan Forest, in close proximity to the Douglas fir, along the road from Laurieston to New Galloway. Sitka Spruce, introduced from British Columbia, has been planted throughout the Forest Park from the lowest ground to the upper plantable limit, on rich brown

old woodland soils, on clays, loams, sands and peats. It is, indeed, catholic in its tastes. It already accounts for the bulk of present production of pulpwood and sawlogs and its share will increase as the vast new plantations, mainly of this species, also come into production. Although disliked by those who do not favour the planting of bare uplands, for it is the principal species used today, it does impart a velvety texture to erstwhile smooth slopes, fits well into a mountainous landscape, and being such a fast grower can reach magnificent proportions in forty years or so. It is probable that many of our future groves of big trees, which will one day be star attractions in themselves, will be of this species.

Until recently Lodgepole pine from Western North America was the second most widely-planted species in the Forest Park. It was either planted pure on exposed ground of poor quality or mixed with Sitka spruce on sites difficult for that species, in the belief that it would improve conditions for the spruce by providing shelter and suppressing heather. In the event it has proved disappointing, sometimes being nursed by the more vigorous spruce instead of nursing it. Its boles have been misshapen by the wind, its crowns broken by the weight of snow and its bark peeled from its stems by deer. For these reasons it is now being planted only on a greatly reduced scale.

Many other coniferous trees have been planted in the Park with differing degrees of success. In the main they have succeeded well on the richer, more sheltered lower valley slopes. Although some kinds such as the West American Grand fir are themselves heavy timber producers it is likely that their chief contribution will be towards amenity and recreation by figuring in selected places as specimens in arboreta and collections of big trees. Noble fir, Western hemlock and Western red cedar, all from North West America, are the most favoured species.

Broadleaved Trees and Landscape Values

Broadleaved trees have not been extensively planted anywhere in the Park as soils and climate are not really favourable. There are, however, several interesting stands of native Sessile oak in Glenhead, Buchan and Caldons Woods, at either end of Loch Trool, and the Lower Camer Wood and the Wood of Cree in the valley of the River Cree. These woods have all been designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest by the Nature Conservancy who are consulted in regard to management. The slender and graceful birch is found throughout the Park in its wild state and together with the rowan, hawthorn and gean or wild cherry does much to enhance the beauty of the scene. Other native trees such as alder, willow and ash are also common on the lower slopes and the banks of streams. The only broad-

leaved plots of note within the Park are one each of two South American beeches, *Nothofagus procera* and *N. obliqua*, on Kirroughtree Forest, with a scattering of towering Australian eucalyptus trees, *Eucalyptus gunnii*, nearby. However, at two neighbouring forests at Gatehouse of Fleet and the Kilsture section of Bareagle Forest near Wigtown, extensive plots of oak, beech and ash have been formed and may be viewed, as may the Kirroughtree plots, from the nature trails.

Throughout the Park certain natural viewpoints have been left unplanted so that the majesty of the hills will not be obscured by trees. It is now clear that mistakes have been made in the past and that early fellings are called for to restore many fine prospects. But an uninterrupted view loses much from its slow degree of change and it is at the *eclat brilliant* or sudden *coup d'oeil* that we must aim. Then, too, as the trees grow tall and are opened up by thinning, views which have been lost a while are revealed once more and often gain in beauty through being seen through trees. Wherever possible viewpoints are sited at car parks or lay-bys in the interests of both the viewers and other road users.

The landscaping of plantations is also now a matter of great importance. Not only should the boundaries conform to the lie of the land rather than, as formerly, cutting across slopes and valleys and along the mountain side in rigid straight lines, but the mass of the plantations themselves must be broken up, and the tones and textures softened by the planting of irregular groups of a different kind of tree throughout the predominantly Sitka spruce matrix. Some of the older plantations at Kirroughtree and Bennan Forests, planted before the introduction of ploughing, point the way, by their great intrinsic beauty, as to how we must proceed.

Protecting the Plantations

The remainder of the land within the Forest Park, which is not intended for planting, some 60,000 acres, comprises permanent grazings, forest small-holdings and some unplantable land separated from the agricultural units, together with small plots set aside for nurseries, amenity purposes, housing and leased grazings. There are six permanent farms and fifteen forest small-holdings. It follows, therefore, that all the plantations are bounded on at least one side, and frequently on more, by sheep grazings, and that they have to be fenced against sheep. These fences have to be maintained until the trees have grown safely beyond the risk of damage.

Sheep are not the only source of danger to the young trees. Three species of deer, roe, red and fallow, occur within the Park and there are numerous wild goats on the higher ground. All these animals will do serious damage to young trees by browsing the shoots and fraying or stripping the bark.

The number of red deer alone trebled in less than twenty years, until by 1965 there were estimated to be some 1500 head in the Forest Park and on immediately adjacent ground. The damage, particularly bark stripping of Lodgepole pine, was immense. The outcome was a control scheme aimed at restoring the red deer herd to its former level of from 500 to 600 beasts. This objective has almost been achieved and damage has diminished in proportion.

The forester's greatest worry has always been fire risk. Although damage by animals may be very much greater it is also much more insidious, whereas fires are spectacular and for most of the trees which suffer, fatal. In the past much money was spent upon prepared defences in the form of hand-screefed traces against fires which perhaps never did occur. Now our main efforts are directed towards speedy detection of any fire that may start, instant alerting of the Fire Brigade and Forestry Commission crews and a rapid and concerted attack upon the fire itself. This calls for first class observation, communication and mobility and we have these in the form of lookouts and fire towers, a radio communications network and modern transport, fire pumps and other fire fighting equipment. The senior District Forest Officer is the Fire Officer for the Mid-Galloway Fire Control Scheme and he is assisted by the Fire Warden, a forester stationed at Glen Trool Forest, who co-ordinates weather reports from various parts of the Park, calculates the Fire Danger Rating and issues it to the constituent Forests daily throughout the fire danger season. He is also responsible for the smooth functioning of the radio network and its control in the event of fire.

Our more experienced approach to forest fire protection does not imply an unawareness of the ease with which fires may be started or the serious damage they may cause. And we must continue to ask the public to co-operate by taking the greatest possible care to extinguish any match or cigarette in the vicinity of our plantations, and even to abstain from smoking altogether during dry weather in the spring and early summer months.

Timber Production

The 130 square miles of plantations within the Forest Park, the bulk of which have been formed within the past fifteen years, constitute a most impressive achievement. Although seven-eighths of the land has now been planted up, the visitor will see for many years to come the changes in texture and landscape as the young crops grow towards maturity. As they grow so too will timber production, from 28,000 cubic metres (roughly 28,000 tons) of fresh-felled timber at present to some 430,000 cubic metres

annually by the time the last crops to be planted come into production. Rather less than half the present output is harvested by the Forestry Commission, the remainder being worked by timber merchants whose share is likely to increase with time.

Timber working lends itself better to mechanisation than any other forestry operation and developments have proceeded apace during the past few years. When the last edition of this Guide was published as recently as 1965 there were references to the axe and saw taking toll of the tall trees and horses and tractors dragging the long poles out to the forest roads. The axe and the hand saw have been gone these past few years, giving way to the power saw. Very few horses now remain and the tractors are a very different breed from those of ten years ago. No doubt progressively heavier and more sophisticated machinery will be developed as the years pass by, and many miles, indeed, of forest road have been constructed to carry ever more and heavier loads of timber. The main demand will probably be for sawlogs and pulpwood as at present, but who would have forecast only a few years ago that the need for pitprops would diminish so far? However, no matter what form the demand may take the woodlands of the Forest Park will be there to meet the challenge.

During the past decade the planted area has increased by half, the planting programmes have been maintained and production has increased yet the numbers of workers employed have fallen from 274 to 130. A further 35 to 40 men are regularly employed by timber merchants within the Park, but the fact remains that fewer, better skilled, more highly paid men with sophisticated machines now do the work for which many more were required in the past. Nevertheless, forestry still provides more employment than hill farming, which is the alternative use of the land.

The demand for Forestry Commission houses has also decreased following much new building by the Local Authorities at Minnigaff and Newton Stewart, and the transfer of some of our own workers to these new housing schemes. Nevertheless, 118 Forestry Commission houses in the Park are still occupied by forest workers and a further 20 by supervisory staff.

Welcoming the Visitor

The Forest Park is spread over a mountainous region with steep glacier-formed valleys, containing many lochs. It is an area of great natural beauty and one to which tourists are already coming in increasing numbers. To play their part in accommodating this influx the Forestry Commission has laid out caravan and camping sites at Caldons beside Loch Trool, and at Talnotry near Murray's Monument on the road from Newton Stewart

to New Galloway. The former is a site with full facilities including hot and cold showers and wash-hand basins. There is also a shop and a shelter hut for use in wet weather. This site will hold up to 240 caravans or tents. The simpler site at Talnotry will accommodate 100 caravans with their own sanitary arrangements, for facilities are limited at present to water stand pipes. Three other sites have been set aside for camping by organised units such as scouts and other youth groups. Ten houses in Glen Trool Village, no longer required for forest workers, have been furnished for short-term letting as holiday homes.

To cater for the day visitor three picnic sites with car parks, one of which has toilets, have been established in co-operation with the Local Authorities. Others are being planned and many minor picnic sites already exist in selected places along the public roadsides. Four forest trails have been laid out already. Descriptive booklets have been issued for each and are available, at moderate prices, from local forest centres. The many miles of forest roads, although forbidden to the motorist, are always open to those who wish to avail themselves of good easy walking in charming, sometimes spectacularly beautiful, country on roads free from traffic.

Some of the fishings in the streams and lochs are let to local angling associations, some are retained by the Forestry Commission. In either case day tickets are available to visitors who wish to fish. There are at present no facilities for sailing or canoeing but we have the provision of these very much in mind. The difficulty is to reconcile these activities with the needs of conservation. It is for this reason that power boating is banned on all our lochs. This has been termed the 'Quiet Country' and we wish to keep it so.

Much wild life can be seen within the Forest Park. There are about 800 head of red deer, probably many more roe deer, a few fallow deer and many hundred wild goats. Amongst birds of prey the golden eagle, peregrine falcon, merlin and hen harrier, can occasionally be seen, while buzzards, kestrels, sparrowhawks and ravens are relatively common. Many game birds occur and the golden pheasant frequents some parts. Salmon are found in many of the rivers and trout in the rivers and some lochs. One of the largest pike on record was taken in Loch Ken on the eastern border of the Park. A Deer Museum has been set up at Clatteringshaws beside the loch of that name and at Craigdews Hill near Murray's Monument a wild goat park has been established.

While the forests of the Galloway Forest Park are the most spectacular in this region they are not the only ones. Other forests which may catch the eye are those of Fleet with plantations at Laurieston, Gatehouse of Fleet and between, Penninghame to the west and north-west of Newton Stewart,

and the Kilsture section of Bareagle Forest close to Wigtown. These all form part of a vast programme of afforestation which will ensure much of Britain's future timber supplies and afford recreation and pleasure to her people.

Let lofty firs, and ashes cool,
My lowly banks o'erspread,
And view, deep-bending in the pool
Their shadows' wat'ry bed;
Let fragrant birks, in woodbines drest,
My craggy clifts adorn;
And, for the little songster's nest,
The close embowering thorn.

The sober laverock, warbling wild,
Shall to the skies aspire;
The gowdspink, Music's gayest child,
Shall sweetly join the choir:
The blackbird strong, the lintwhite clear
The mavis mild and mellow;
The robin pensive Autumn cheer,
In all her locks of yellow.

Bruar Water

Laverock - skylark
Gowdspink - goldfinch
Mavis - song thrush
Lintwhite - linnet

Roads in and around the Forest Park

Herbert L.Edlin

A round tour of the park

No public road crosses the great hill range of The Merrick, which forms the heart of the Galloway Forest Park. In order to see all of its many faces, and its features of historic and scenic interest, it is necessary to use the roads that encircle these grand hills. The full circle covers 76 miles, and rewarding diversions can add another 60 miles to this. A long summer's day is needed to cover it fully—allowing for the many halts needed to take in the superb views.

In the account that follows it is assumed, for convenience, that the motorist starts at Newton Stewart (*plate 3b*); the story is broken into sections so that the route can be picked up by those who begin elsewhere. Those staying at the camp site, for example, can begin at Glen Trool Village, those coming south from Ayr will start at Dalmellington, and those who come west from Dumfries will come in at New Galloway, continuing as appropriate.

Newton Stewart to Bargrennan and Glen Trool Village (*10 miles*)

Leaving Newton Stewart by the main road, A714, north-west towards Girvan, the way runs first above the deep valley of the River Cree; this is seen down on the right with the village of Minnigaff beyond. Next you cross open fields to the hamlet of Challoch, and just beyond this reach the outskirts of Penninghame Forest, close to Penninghame House. This name is a very old one; it was once spelt Pennegem, and is a Norse term derived from *pennig hjem* meaning 'the homestead for which pennies (money) are paid'—hence a rented farm. The modern forest, on the poorer land of the estate, was begun in 1950, and the main trees to be seen are Sitka spruce and Japanese larch. 'Challoch' is from Gaelic *teallach*, a smithy.

The River Cree now comes into view again on the right. Its broad bed, which appears shingly in summer but is filled to the brim by winter floods, is here fringed by wide reed-beds. On the farther bank stands the Wood of Cree, an old natural stand of oak, and down the middle of it plunges a foaming white cataract, one of the three local falls called 'The Grey Mare's Tail'.

A little farther on, the road drops to a gravel terrace just beside the stream, and on the left it is bordered for two miles by a beautiful strip of

birchwood. Decorative conifers, such as hemlock, silver fir, Douglas fir, and cypress, have been planted below these birches to take their place later on. At Clauchaneasy, a Gaelic name meaning 'stone dwelling by the waterfall', the character of the country changes. The fringing fields are suddenly replaced by rough moorland, the broad river becomes a hill burn, and the rugged summits of Lamachan and the distant Merrick dominate the landscape to the east.

Bargrennan, the next hamlet, has a church, a post office and shop, an inn aptly named 'House o' Hill', and a meeting hall. Here the route diverges right and runs through spruce and larch woods to Glen Trool Village. This was built by the Forestry Commission in 1953 to house its workers close to the woods; the buildings, with their colour-washed gable ends, are well designed and attractively laid out. There is a shop and a village school, and on certain days of the week a bus links the community with Newton Stewart. The forest office is situated about ¼ mile farther on.

Glen Trool Village to Caldons Camp Site and Bruce's Stone

(7 miles outward, 14 return, no through route)

Just north of the village, a road signposted 'Glen Trool', runs east through the fields of the Glencaird Estate, past tall woods of pine, spruce, beech, and larch, to regain the moorland. It crosses the River Minnoch by a modern concrete bridge close to falls that include the Black Linn. There is a car park here, with picnic benches, a forest trail, and toilets. Beyond, the road passes young plantations to reach the natural woods of oak and birch that beautify the glen of the Water of Trool.

Those who wish to reach the Camp Site, or to see the Martyrs' Memorial, must turn off right at a clear signpost, and cross a couple of bridges. The Caldons camping ground then lies straight ahead, with the Warden's office at the head of the brae. To find the memorial, leave your car just after the first bridge, and strike off right (west) along a clear path that follows a stony ridge through a native oakwood. A concrete causeway leads to the memorial, which is surrounded by a low stone wall.

For the main route to Bruce's Stone, we return to the north side of the river, and go on, in the same direction as before, to the grounds of Glen Trool Lodge. The road skirts these as it climbs. Tall woods of pine, oak, beech, silver fir, spruce and larch, fringing the loch which is now seen far below, heighten the wild grandeur of the scene.

Cars must be left at a signposted park (no charge) as there is no turning place beyond. A short walk now brings you to Bruce's Stone, splendidly sited on a bluff giving grand views over the loch. Down-stream, it winds in

majesty towards woodland and the open plain, and you will realise why the Gaels called it *loch an t' sruthail*, the river-shaped loch. The romantic tree-clad islet set in its heart is called the Maiden Isle.

Straight across the loch you see the steep, rough slopes of Mulldonach, the Tawny Hill [1627 feet]. It was down these slopes that in AD 1307 Robert the Bruce and his warriors rolled stones to break up the English force who were following a narrow track beside the loch shore; they descended to rout them in the Battle o' the Steps o' Trool. 'Steps' here means 'steeps'.

The eastward view reveals the broad valley of the Glenhead Burn, fringed with native oakwoods, many of the trees being of the sessile kind, *Quercus petraea*. The farmstead of the Buchan, built about 1856 in the style of a castle, is seen just below. To reach the fine Buchan Falls, follow the gravelled road downhill round hairpin bends, to cross a bridge. One inscription thereon records the fact that both road and bridge were built by Randolph, Ninth Earl of Galloway, in 1851. Another repeats lines from Sir Walter Scott's lyrical poetry:

> O Caledonia! Stern and wild,
> Meet nurse for a poetic child,
> Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
> Land of the mountain and the flood,
> Land of my sires! What mortal hand
> Can e'er untie the filial band
> That knits me to thy rugged strand?

The path leading to the falls, which is clearly signposted as part of a forest trail, runs off to the left just beyond the bridge. A steep, but rewarding climb for half a mile reveals a rare succession of foaming cataracts in a deep rocky cleft. They are at their best after heavy rain, when the Buchan Burn is in spate. 'Buchan', by the way recalls the days when the Comyn family, Earls of Buchan in north-east Scotland, were overlords of this wild forest.

Another path, running behind the Buchan farmstead, forms the main approach route for rambles in two directions. You can strike south-east up the Glenhead Burn for the ascent of Lamachan Hill [2350] and its outlier Curleywee [2212] or cross the low watershed to Loch Dee. In either case you can strike the hill track that runs south to Drigmorn, with a road thence to Newton Stewart. Or else you can strike north-east up the Gairland Burn to Loch Valley, Loch Neldricken, and remote Loch Enoch, hidden away amid the crags, high on the shoulder of the Merrick.

The main path up the Merrick is easily found. Close to Bruce's Stone

a well-trodden track begins its climb up into the valley of the Buchan Burn, above the falls. It runs on to the ruins of Culsharg, an old shieling, to gain the ridge of Benyellary (*beinn iolaire*, hill of the eagles) which leads on to The Merrick (*tiu meurig*, the 'Finger' of the Range of the Awful Hand). This peak, at 2764 feet, is the highest in the south of Scotland, and so commands tremendous views, yet it cannot be seen from Glen Trool itself. Culsharg was used as a shieling, or summer cottage, by shepherds as late as 1947.

Glen Trool Village to Straiton, the Nick o' the Balloch, and Loch Bradan (*18 miles direct, without diversions*)

Describing the main route first, take the road due north from Glen Trool Village (turn right if you come from the Bruce's Stone or from Camp Site). This runs up the western side of the Water of Minnoch, winding through plantations of the blue-green Sitka spruce, and the handsome Japanese larch—glistening blue-green in summer leaf, but showing bare russet twigs in winter.

After three miles the road reaches open hill pastures, retained for the winter grazing of sheep that range the Merrick heights in summer.

This open stretch provides a magnificent view of the Park's highest peaks, the famous Range of the Awful Hand. Working from south to north, that is from right to left as one faces the hills, the succession is: Bennan, Benyellary, The Merrick, Kirriereoch Hill [2565], Carmaddie Brae [1957], Tarfessock [2520], Shalloch-on-Minnoch [with twin summits, 2520 and 2163], and finally Shalloch itself [1777].

Two miles beyond Palgowan the road crosses into Ayrshire, and continues up the Minnoch valley to Rowantree, where it forks. Take the right-hand road, and follow its bends up the Shalloch Pass, to cross the watershed at 1421 feet, the highest point touched by any public road in the Park. Two small plantations, one on either side of the road, are 'pilot plots' established by the Forestry Commission Research Branch to see what trees will thrive here, in advance of full-scale planting. The first stream crossed as the road begins its descent northwards is the River Stinchar at Stinchar Bridge. Still falling steadily the road runs down eventually into the valley of quite another stream, the Water of Girvan. A series of bends leads down through plantations of Japanese larch, Sitka spruce, and the hardy Lodgepole pine from western North America, and there are fine views towards the plain of Ayrshire to the north. Then suddenly the moorlands and forests are left behind, and the road drops into a sheltered pastoral valley, which is followed for three miles into Straiton (*see plate 14*).

36 Main Street and clock tower, Newton Stewart

37 Murray's Monument and the car park for the Talnotry picnic place and Grey Mare's Tail waterfall, on the Newton Stewart to New Galloway road

38 The Minnoch Bridge spans a rocky chasm on the road into Glen Trool

39 The Merrick in cloud, seen from Shalloch-on-Minnoch Hill

40 Glen Trool and its winding loch, seen from the Fell of Esconchan: Caldons camp lies amid the far oakwoods

41 Buzzard and fledglings on their nest of twigs in an oak tree

42 Short-eared owl, a ground nesting species that hunts relentlessly for field voles

43 Birches beside Loch Ken, a hydro-electric power source on the Water of Ken

44 Dundeugh Forest on Dundeugh Hill, with the dam that holds back the Kendoon Loch water for the Galloway hydro-electric power scheme, near the New Galloway – Dalmellington road

45 Cock pheasant, a frequent bird in lowland Galloway woods

46 Woodcock sitting close and well camouflaged on its woodland nest

47 Craigdews Crags, near Talnotry on the Newton Stewart to New Galloway road; now the Galloway Goat Park

48 On the Forest Trail through Kirroughtree Forest. A seat beside a plantation of the rare Chilean beech, *Nothofagus obliqua*

Diversion to Loch Bradan (2 miles)

From Stinchar Bridge (see above), a county road runs off to the right (east) and crosses rough country to Loch Bradan, still at 1000 feet above sea level. This gives one a glimpse of the great wilderness of rock and peat that extends eastwards for six miles to Loch Doon, a waste that has now, in part, been tamed by the Forestry Commission's giant tractor-drawn ploughs, which have made it fit for tree planting. Loch Bradan now includes Loch Lure, the two having been joined when the outlet was dammed to provide water for the district around Ayr. At the same time an ancient castle was swallowed below the rising waters, which actually form part of the Water of Girvan's stream.

Diversion to Nick o' the Balloch and Straiton

(*Distances:* Rowantree to North Balloch—4 miles; Glen Trool Village via North Balloch to Straiton—20 miles).

At Rowantree take the left fork, signposted 'Girvan', and climb to the Nick o' the Balloch pass [1278], on the slopes of Rowantree Hill [1811].

There is a dramatic descent by a winding road, which takes only one-way traffic between passing bays, down the steep slopes above the Balloch Burn. On the left, the rounded summits of Glengap Hill, Haggis Hill, Larg Hill, and Balloch Hill provide scenery that recalls the central Borders, around Moffat. The waving ranks of spruce and pine lower down enhance the wild splendour of the scene. Then, quite suddenly, the road drops into the quiet sheltered dale of the River Stinchar, with its prosperous sheep farms.

From Balloch, you may go west down the valley to reach the picturesque village of Barr, below Carrick Forest, Alternatively, an exciting road winds north to cross another hill range which affords fine views over Ayrshire to the far peaks of the Isle of Arran. After descending by the De'il's Elbow, one can take a right turn for Straiton.

Straiton to Dalmellington (*7 miles*)

This road, which provides the first west-to-east link on the north side of the Park, runs for seven miles across rolling sheep pastures.

Dalmellington to Loch Doon and its castle (*9 miles*)

Take the Castle Douglas road for two miles south-east of Dalmellington. Then take a right-hand turn running westwards and clearly signposted

'Loch Doon Castle'. This crosses hill grazings to reach the rugged, tree-clad Ness Glen (Glen of the Waterfalls), through which the River Doon once plunged on its way north towards Ayr. The road now crosses the great high dam which today holds back nearly all the Doon waters, so that they run south to yield hydro-electric power on their way to the Dee estuary at Kirkcudbright; only a trickle now runs north.

The road now follows the west shore of Loch Doon, at first through open pastures, but then below the new woods of the Starr section of Carrick Forest. You will see the forester's office, and the cottages that have been built for key workmen and trappers. Eventually you reach the ruins of Castle Doon, a fastness that once stood on an islet. These ruins were removed and re-built, stone by stone, when the level of the loch was raised and the islet was submerged (*see plate 21*).

A little further on there is a turning point where a broad stream called the Carrick Lane plunges down from the high wastes, carrying the waters of Loch Riecawr and Loch Macaterick. Across the head of Loch Doon, you can see the splendid range of the Rhinns of Kells, named in turn Black Craig [1730], Corran o' Portmark [2042], Bow, Meaul [2383], and Corserine [The Crossings, 2668]. A portion of Dundeugh Forest, which now lies within the Forest Park, touches on this topmost summit, which is, of course, above the planting line. Beyond the head of Loch Doon itself, afforestation is now being extended up the remote valley of the Gala Lane, to form the Glenhead plantations.

There is no through road beyond Loch Doon, so the way must be retraced to Dalmellington.

Dalmellington to Carsphairn, Dundeugh Forest, Dalry and New Galloway (*22 miles*)

For most of the way this is simply the main road south-west (A713) from Ayr to Castle Douglas.

From Dalmellington the road follows the narrow glen of the oddly named Muck Water, a title that probably originates in the Gaelic *muic*, meaning a pig. After crossing the watershed at a height of 990 feet, the road runs past Loch Muck and leaves Ayrshire for the Glenkens district of Kirkcudbrightshire. From this point on it runs over magnificent open uplands, with grazings of fair quality devoted to the raising of sheep. Loch Doon is seen to the west, and on its farther shores the young plantations on the foothills of the Merrick range are now beginning to show up.

Heading for Carsphairn, the road now runs eastward of the Rhinns of Kells. Down in the valley of the Carsphairn Lane one can see the outlet of

the great water pipe that runs, through a tunnel, from Loch Doon to feed the Kendoon Hydro-electric scheme. This carries, southwards, water that would otherwise have gone north to the Firth of Clyde. On the left-hand side of the highway, the great hill called Cairnsmore of Carsphairn rises above its brethren to a height of 2612 feet. 'Carsphairn' is an interesting compound name, involving the Norse *kjarr*, an alder swamp, and the Gaelic *fearn*, an alder tree. 'Cairnsmore' means the great rocky hill, and is pure Gaelic.

Beyond the windswept village of Carsphairn the road crosses the main stream, now called the Water of Deugh, which winds round to form the Kendoon Loch, an artificial reservoir. The sprucewoods of Dundeugh Forest are plainly in view on either side of this loch, and clothe the steep sides of Dundeugh Hill close by. To the west of the road, younger plantations of spruce, pine and larch are seen running high up the slopes of Cairngarroch [2155], an outlier of the Rhinns of Kells.

The road now passes just beside the first of three high dams, with associated power stations, belonging to the hydro-electric board. This dam generates power from the pent-up waters of the Kendoon Loch, which feed in turn the Carsfad Loch, now seen in the deep glen below. A second dam is soon reached, and this supplies water, through the turbines, to the Earlstoun Loch still lower down. Beyond this, follow the side road into St. John's Town of Dalry, and halt awhile to admire the pleasing plan of its streets, and its charming cottages. The village stands on a hillock, and the westward views towards The Merrick are remarkably fine.

Continuing southwards, the road follows the level flood-plain of the Water of Ken, to a crossroads by a high humped bridge. Turn right, and then left at the next cross-roads, to reach New Galloway, the smallest burgh in Scotland.

Loch Ken (*10 miles outwards to Laurieston*)

To the south of New Galloway a main road, A762, continues down the shores of Loch Ken towards Laurieston and Kirkcudbright. It is a remarkably beautiful route, well meriting a run since the return views are as fine as the outward ones. The loch itself is an artificial one, formed by damming up the waters of the River Ken and the River Dee so that still further power may be won from them, at the Tongland Barrage near Kirkcudbright, where a tremendous volume of water makes a low drop. But it has all the appearance of a natural loch, with its still waters framed by a delightful screen of birches and alders. Above it, on the slopes above the road, stand the tall plantations of Bennan Forest, which forms part of

the Park. The Douglas fir, from British Columbia, proves an outstandingly successful tree here.

The road leaves the loch side near New Galloway station, but it is worth while continuing as far as Laurieston, to see the trees of the Laurieston plantations of Fleet Forest rising like a green tapestry on the farther shores of Woodhall Loch. As you return to New Galloway, note just to the south of the town, beside the loch, the roofless ruins of historic Kenmure Castle.

New Galloway to Clatteringshaws Loch, Forest and Newton Stewart, with Deer Museum and Wild Goat Park (*19 miles*)

At the cross-roads north of New Galloway, take the A712 Newton Stewart road, which soon begins the long climb up the glen of the Knocknairling Burn to reach the breezy uplands around Clatteringshaws. The young plantations of Bennan Forest are seen at first on the left, then on both sides of the road. An attractive group of modern houses, close to New Galloway, was built expressly for the men who tend this thriving woodland.

Soon after the loch comes into view, halt near the King's Stone to admire the westward prospect. It was here, on the Moss of Raploch, that Robert the Bruce first defeated the English in AD 1307. The Clatteringshaws Loch is a modern creation, formed by the dam at its south end; it impounds the waters of the Dee, which flows south-east; but they are diverted north-east, via a tunnel, into the valley of the Ken, to provide a steep fall to a power-house near Glenlee. Halt here to visit the fine Galloway Deer Museum with its exhibits illustrating the region's history and wild life (*see plates 13, 33*).

On the north shore of the loch stands the young forest called The Garraries, a name which probably stems from the Gaelic *gearr araidhs*, meaning the wee sheilings or summer homesteads. A new forest road—open to walkers but not to cars, provides access to the far hinterland between the Dee and its headwaters, and the high Rhinns of Kells. It passes the Backhill o' the Bush, a shepherd's cottage now deserted; this could formerly only be reached by a track across the Rhinns, and it is said that the last shepherd's wife, once safely installed, never left it for years on end!

The main road for Newton Stewart descends into a rock cutting to pass below the Clatteringshaws dam, and then runs through extensive new plantations on either side of the Palnure Burn. Just after crossing a fine modern bridge (built to replace an old one that fell victim to a spate), a halt is indicated for a visit to the Grey Mare's Tail. The waterfalls (there are two of them) on the Grey Mare's Tail Burn are the finest in the Park. The obelisk on the Fell of Talnotry, just above the road, is called Murray's

Monument, and commemorates Professor Alexander Murray (1774–1813), an Oriental scholar who was born at Dunkitterick nearby. Just north of the waterfall you will find the Wild Goat Park on the Crags of Talnotry. The caravan site stands nearby.

From this point on the road runs through the thriving pine, spruce and larchwoods of Kirroughtree Forest, which reach almost continuously for seven miles into Newton Stewart. The great hill that rises on the left, across the valley, is Cairnsmore of Fleet [2391]. A right turn at the first major junction leads, in one mile, to Minnigaff and the bridge over the Cree, and thus into Newton Stewart, where our round tour began.

Byways around Newton Stewart

The roads described below provide good means of seeing the delightful countryside on the south-western fringes of the Park. They are suitable for excursions on foot, by cycle, or at a leisurely pace by car.

Minnigaff, up the East Bank of the Cree to Glen Trool (*17 miles outward*)

Cross the Cree by the big bridge at Newton Stewart, and almost at once turn left and proceed up the main street of Minnigaff. At the head of this you will see a sawmill which uses much locally-grown timber. Just before the sawmill, bear left, and follow the secondary road that runs for eight miles along the eastern side of the River Cree.

For most of the way it runs through oakwoods or green pasture lands, and on the left the river flows quietly down through broad reed-beds. About four miles out of Newton Stewart you pass just below the cataract called the Grey Mare's Tail (one of the three so-called in the Park). Three of the oakwoods, namely the Wood of Cree, Low Camer, and High Camer (Norse *kamer*, hillocks), form part of the Park, while Penninghame Forest is seen around Penninghame House on the far side of the river.

Eventually the country becomes wilder, and moorland plants succeed the pasture grasses. Where another by-road strikes in from a bridge over the Cree, bear right and you soon reach a second junction. Here you may turn right for Glen Trool itself, and the Caldons camp site, or left for Glen Trool Village and the return by the main road (Girvan-Newton Stewart) through Bargrennan to Newton Stewart.

Auchinleck Farm, Bargaly Glen and Daltamie (*20 miles round*)

Start as before in Minnigaff, but bear right at the sawmill. The country road may now be followed for four miles to the farmstead of Auchinleck.

On the left you have a good view over the Cumloden Deer Parks, owned by the Earl of Galloway, towards the high Lamachan hill range.

On the return journey, bear left three miles short of Minnigaff, and in a little under a mile you will strike the Newton Stewart to New Galloway road. Turn left, and about one and a half miles farther on make a right turn on to another by-road. This leads down through the Kirroughtree woods and into the beautiful Bargaly Glen where the Palnure Burn winds between sheltered pastures and tall oakwoods. Keep right at the first fork, and later take a right turn for Daltamie.

Daltamie House, which is signposted, is the centre of the Forestry Commission's Kirroughtree Forest Nursery, which may be visited during normal working hours. The nursery covers 47 acres, and in it each year millions of young trees are raised, nearly all of them from seed, for planting on the hillsides. There is also a small forestry museum here.

The road past Daltamie climbs a brae, passes the old Palnure lead mines, and then joins the main road running straight back to Newton Stewart.

An alternative way to reach Daltamie is to follow the main Creetown road A75 (bus route Newton Stewart–Gatehouse) for three miles to Palnure. Just before the railway bridge turn off left; a quarter of a mile beyond, a left fork leads below demonstration plots showing various kinds of forest trees, established in the shelter of an oakwood, straight to Daltamie.

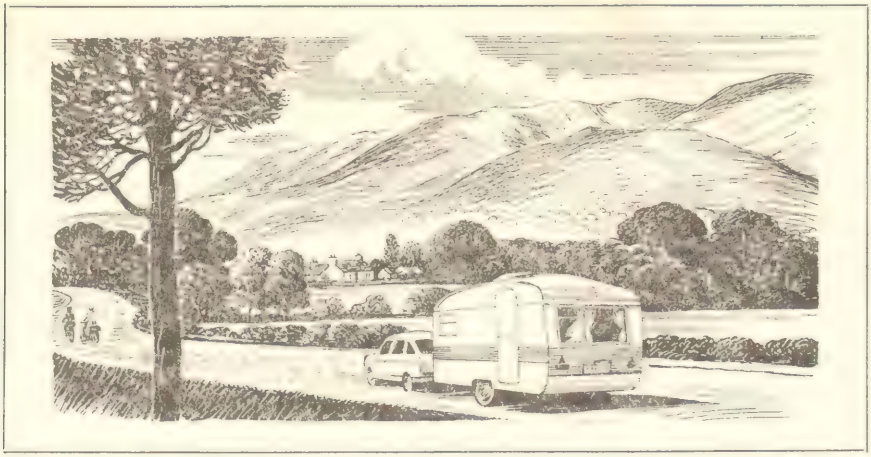
Moneypool Burn and Water of Fleet

This forms a round tour of 37 miles by car or cycle. Walkers can accomplish it by taking the Dumfries bus to Creetown, returning on the Newton Stewart bus from Gatehouse of Fleet; walking distance 11 miles.

From Newton Stewart take the main road A75 south-east to Creetown (7 miles). As you leave Newton Stewart note on the left the steep bluffs that form the ancient shoreline, clad in mixed woods of oak, birch and young conifers. To the right, the tidal river Cree winds through level green fields towards its broad estuary and the open sea.

As soon as you reach Creetown turn off left to begin the slow climb up the glen of the Moneypool Burn. The woods that fringe the road for one and a half miles are of oak and birch; they are being slowly replenished by the Forestry Commission, using shade-bearing coniferous trees; they form part of Kirroughtree Forest.

The track of the old railway is followed for a while, and the steep grey granite crags, called the Clints of Drummore, are seen across the moor to the north. Clint is an old Norse name for a cliff, while Drummore is Gaelic and means 'the great ridge.' Just after the old railway track is left, near its



On the Clauchaneasy Road

long Cullendoch viaduct, the view northwards opens out, to reveal the broad expanses of spruce and pine forming the Cullendoch woods of Bennan Forest.

The Big Water of Fleet is now seen running down from the north, and its delightful glen is followed all the way to the sea at Gatehouse of Fleet. All the woods in this glen are in private ownership; besides yielding valuable timber they add much charm to the landscape of the estates, and much useful shelter to farm fields. Gatehouse is an attractive little township on the Fleet estuary, but its harbour is no longer used. Fleet Forest, immediately to the south-east, has some fine young hardwood crops and a large forest nursery, which may be visited during working hours.

The return to Newton Stewart, by car or bus, should be made by the coast road, which reveals the full beauty of Wigtown Bay and the Cree estuary; away to the south, at the mouth of Fleet Bay, you may glimpse also the little Isles of Fleet.

And art thou come?—and art thou true?
O welcome, dear, to love and me!
And let us all our vows renew,
Along the flowery banks of Cree.

Here is the Glen

Walking Routes

Andrew McCormick

'Give me,' says Hazlitt, 'the clear blue sky over my head, and the green turf beneath my feet, a winding road before me, and a three hours' march to dinner—then to thinking. It is hard if I cannot start some game on these lone heaths. I laugh, I run, I leap, I sing for joy.'

There are many fine walks over the 'lone heaths' of the Galloway Forest Park, so many that only a few can be outlined here. These will, however, form a good introduction to the fine walking country at the upper levels, after which the visitor will find it easy to devise attractive alternatives of his own.

All the routes described below begin and end at points which can be approached along a reasonably good road or track by car or cycle. The first seven routes begin close to the Caldons camp site.

Visitors taking the routes or paths that *cross* the more remote parts of Glen Trool and Carrick Forests should allow ample time both to approach these starting points and to reach shelter or transport on the farther side. The going across these rugged uplands of rock and peat is strenuous; really sound footwear is essential, and many of the walks take more time and effort than the distances and height of land might suggest. But it is worth it!

1 The Merrick (*about 12 miles, circular*)

From the Bruce Memorial at the north side of Loch Trool, take the path which leads from the head of Buchan Brae, via Culsharg to Benyellary and on to The Merrick. Descend to Loch Enoch. Then proceed south to the Murder Hole of Loch Neldricken, Loch Valley, and down Gairland Burn back to Buchan Farm in Glen Trool.

2 The Dungeon and Mullwharchar (*14 miles, circular*)

Pass Buchan House, just beyond the Bruce Stone, by the signposted track to the rear of the farmyard, and then take the path up the Gairland Burn, crossing it twice to reach Loch Valley. Then go up along the Mid Burn and across it to the east of Loch Neldricken, to the Cairn on the watershed. Cross the Dungeon Hill and Mullwharchar, returning to the west of Lochs Enoch, Arron, Neldricken (passing the Murder Hole) and Valley. Return by the outward path to Buchan.

3 Craignaw (*13 miles, circular*)

Take path as in route 2 to the Cairn, then turn southwards across Wee Craignaw (the De'il's Bowling Green), and veering to the left and backwards, approach the crest of Craignaw by a long, steep slope which leads to one of the Nicks known as the Seggie Goats, or Guts. Return via the west side of the Cooran Lane, keeping well up on the hard high ground. At Cornarroch Strand turn west via the south side of Lochs Narroch and Valley till the outward path from Buchan is reached.

4 Caldons to White Laggan and Lamachan (*12 miles, circular*)

From Caldons take the path along the south-east side of Loch Trool, turning east along the south side of the glen between Lochs Trool and Dee, keeping well up on the drier ground till White Laggan is reached. Then return over the top of Curleywee, Bennanbrack, Lamachan, and Mulldonach to Caldons. From Lamachan other routes to House o' Hill Inn, Bargrennan, or to Newton Stewart (route 6), may be selected.

5 Glenhead to Craiglee (*10 miles, circular*)

From Glenhead Farm, take the path eastwards up the glen to Dargall Lane, and then turn north opposite a fine waterfall and cross Craiglee. Return past Dow Loch and along the Rig o' the Jarkness, and then by a pathway which branches off along the lower side of the White Brae and leads back to Glenhead.

6 Glenhead to Newton Stewart (*12 miles, through route*)

Following a southerly direction the route passes over Nick o' the Lochans, Cambrick Hill, Bennanbrack, Lamachan, Larg Hill, through Glenmalloch and down Knockman Wood to Boreland Lodge, one mile north of Minnigaff and two from Newton Stewart.

7 Caldons to Murray's Monument (*11 miles, through route*)

Ascend the Caldons Burn to Bennanbrack; go on over Curleywee, White Laggan, Millfore, and along Grey Mare's Tail Burn. From White Laggan other routes may be taken to Newton Stewart (8), or via Craigencallie to Clatteringshaws Loch and the Old Bridge of Dee.

8 Auchinleck to Loch Dee (*6 miles, through route*)

From Auchinleck Farm, five miles, by road, north of Newton Stewart, go by the path along the right (east) side of Penkiln Burn till the Pulnee Burn joins it, and then keep on the left (west) side of the Pulnee Burn, and follow the path till a dyke is reached. After crossing the Pulnee Burn again, incline up the brae to the left, till there is reached the cart road which leads over the Nick o' Curleywee all the way to White Laggan and Loch Dee. A good return route is via the top of Curleywee to Lamachan, and thence via route 6.

9 Old Edinburgh Road (*25 miles, circular*)

From Old Minnigaff, near Newton Stewart, to Old Bridge of Dee below Clatteringshaws Loch, returning by the main road to Newton Stewart. Or, by branching off near Dallash, after passing Murray's Monument, a fine walk may be had along a path down Bargaly Glen to Little Park and the Kirroughtree Forest nursery at Daltamie. From Daltamie take the old road west to Blackcraig and Newton Stewart, or go south to Palnure.

10 The Awful Hand Range (*15 miles, through route*)

From Rowantree by way of Shalloch Burn (visiting the Preacher's Stone); or up Knocklach Burn to the top of Shalloch-on-Minnoch. Thence in a southerly direction, crossing Tarfessock, Carmaddie Brae, Kirriereoch, Spear o' The Merrick, The Merrick, and Benyellary, and down past Culsharg to the head of Buchan Brae and the Bruce Memorial.

11 Shalloch-on-Minnoch to Loch Doon (*12 miles, through route*)

From Rowantree via Nick o' Carclach, Tunskeen, Loch Fannie, the Starr to Craigmalloch, where the public road is reached. From Tunskeen, Cove Macaterick may be reached (see 13 below). The distance from Craigmalloch to Dalmellington is about 8 miles.

12 Aldinna Route (*12 miles, circular*)

From North Balloch climb almost to the Nick o' Balloch, then turn east and cross the southern shoulder of Pinbreck Hill to the top of Meowl of Aldinna. Follow down Aldinna Loch Burn to the Black Row, where one strikes a path which leads west, back to North Balloch.

13 From Stinchar Bridge to The Buchan (*15 miles, through route*)

From Stinchar Bridge the route proceeds via the northern side of Loch Cornish, across Craigmasheenie, past Slaethornrig, to Tunskeen. Then by alternative routes via Cove Macaterick and along the Eglin Lane (13A). Or from Tunskeen via Carmaddie Brae, below Kirriereoch Hill, and Loch Twachtan (13), in either case leading to the south-west corner of Loch Enoch. Thence proceed via Lochs Neldricken and Valley and the Gairland Burn to Buchan.

To locate Cove Macaterick draw a line from the junction of the Black Garpel and the Eglin Lane to the top of Macaterick Hill, and about five hundred yards from the junction will be found the entrance to the cave, which is about the same distance from Loch Macaterick.

NB. The entrance to Cove Macaterick has fallen in, and it is impossible to get into the cave now. Moreover, the part of this route between the Cove and Loch Enoch consists of boggy, difficult ground, and should be avoided. The shepherds prefer the route via Carmaddie Brae, below Kirriereoch Hill, and Twachtan (13).

14 Loch Doon to Craiglure (*8 miles, through route*)

A roadway has been made from the gamekeeper's cottage at the head of Loch Doon to Loch Riecawr, and a pathway leads on to Balloch Lodge, from which a roadway connects with the Straiton–Newton Stewart Road.

15 From Knockdon to Craiglee on the west side of Loch Doon (*10 miles, circular*)

At Knockdon Farm take the new road leading up to Loch Bradan, but about four hundred yards from the farm branch off to the left along an old drove road. Follow that path as well as possible, keeping Loch Derclach well to your left. Then turn up to the right, after crossing the Polcraywie Burn near the middle of Loch Finlas, till you reach the west end of Craiglee. Turn to the left along its lower ridge, and easing off slightly to the right choose the easiest gradient and best footing right to the top. The return journey brings one back past the end of Loch Bradan, and to the west of the Doon of Waterhead, where may be inspected cairns, thought to be Bronze Age ones. From the top of Craiglee it is a short walk on to Loch Doon.

16 From The Buchan to Loch Doon (*15 miles, through route*)

In all these little-frequented parts of Scotland the Carrick Forest enjoys the distinction of containing perhaps the least-walked-upon area of

ground—that lying in between the south end of Loch Doon and the crest of Mullwharchar. Whoever takes the walk which extends from Mulwharchar to the south end of Loch Doon will be well advised if he wears a pair of good strong boots, and even then he should choose a day after a long spell of dry weather. The Mullwharchar is reached as in route 2 (either outward or homeward paths). Thence the line of route passes along the Tauchers, and, after dipping down past a precipitous gully known as the Lum o' the Wee Tauchers, leads along the Gala Lane to Loch Doon. Wild and lonely as it is, it makes the right kind of background for the scream of the eagle, the cry of the buzzard, the wail of the peregrine falcon and the yelp of the fox.

17 New Galloway Station to Clatteringshaws Loch (*11 miles, through route*)

The best way to take this walk is to start from the old New Galloway Station. Just north of the station and opposite Loch Ken, go along the new forest road into Bennan Forest. Bear left towards the Stroan Loch at the first junction. A good forest road can now be followed westward, along the north side of the River Dee. Wherever it forks, take the lower route, but do not follow any road that actually crosses the river. The road leads on, past an isolated cottage, to the high road from New Galloway to Newton Stewart, joining it at Clatteringshaws Loch.

From Clatteringshaws, Newton Stewart may be reached by either of the paths described under (9) above.

18 The Forest Road through The Garraries (*27 miles, through route*): *this route is not open to cars*

In order to make possible the development of the new Garraries Forest, a road has been driven from the neighbourhood of Clatteringshaws Loch northwards. It runs through the great trough in the hills between the Merrick Range and the Rhinns of Kells, to reach the south end of Loch Doon. This new road leaves the A712 New Galloway–Newton Stewart road at a point four miles west of New Galloway. It leads out to the New Galloway–Dalmellington road at a point two miles south of Dalmellington. The route provides a means of access, for the more energetic hill walker, to the wild hinterland of the Merrick, and the old steading called the Backhill o' the Bush provides wet-weather shelter; but the through distance from New Galloway to Dalmellington is twenty-seven miles.

In conclusion, respect and appreciate private property and its owner will respect, appreciate and welcome you.

49 A sturdy tractor, equipped with winches, draws logs from a felling in Bennan Forest, near New Galloway

50 Winter at the south end of Loch Doon; Loch Head farm and the Coran o' Portmark

51 Summer storm over Loch Doon; looking south from the western shore towards the Rhinns o' Kells: Bow, Meaul, Carlin's Cairn and Corserine

52 Barr Village, near Carrick Forest

53 New Galloway, close to Bennan Forest

54 A bend on the River Cree, near Newton Stewart

55 Loch Macaterick, Hoodens Hill and Mullwharchar [2270 feet], west of Loch Doon in the remote and desolate heart of the Forest Park

56 Swans at their reed-built nest on a Galloway loch

57 Roe buck and doe surprised at their mating ring in a hazel thicket; June

58 Westward view from the Newton Stewart – Maybole road, near the De'il's Elbow, four miles south of Crosshill. Far away rise Goat Fell and its neighbouring peaks on the Isle of Arran

59 A powerful tractor draws a huge plough to prepare peaty moorlands, near Clatteringshaws Loch, for forest planting

60 Shackling a load of logs to a sturdy horse at a felling in Bennan Forest

Some place names in the park

The sources are Gaelic, unless otherwise noted.

Rivers and Lochs

Cree *Crioch*, the border river, forming the boundary between Wigtownshire and the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, each an ancient kingdom.
Dee, Deugh Old Celtic river names.
Doon *Dun*, the fortress, once established on an islet that is now buried below the raised waters.
Enoch, Loch *Eidheannach*, icy loch.
Fleet Norse *fljot*, the stream or flood.
Ken *Ceann*, the headland.
Lane From Gaelic *lan*—a torrent.
Linn Gaelic: waterfall.
Minnoch *Meadhonach*, the middle river—between the Trool and the Cree.
Palnure *Pol 'n iubhar*—Pool of the yew trees.
Valley, Loch *Bhealaich*, loch of the pass.

Hills

Benbrack *Beinn breac*, dappled hill.
Bennan The little hill, or lesser summit.
Benyellary *Beinn iolaire*, hill of the eagles.
Cairnsmore *Carn mor*, great hill.
Corserine *Chrois a rhinn*, crossing of the ridges.
Kirriereoch *Coire riochd*, the great corrie.
The Merrick *Tiu meur-ach*, the finger or point.
Rig o' the Jarkness Rig of the *uachneas*. Ridge of the lonely desolate waste (Norse-Gaelic).
Shalloch *Shalach*, the heel or spur of the ridge.

Forests and Forest Blocks

Cairn Edward From the hill where Edward, brother to Robert the Bruce, built his victory cairn, *circa* AD 1308.
Carrick *Carraig*, the rocks. In the Carrick division of Ayrshire.
Changue *Sithean gath*, Hill-shoulder of the fairy mountains.
Dundeugh Fortress of the waters.

The Garraries *Gearr-araidhs*, the wee shielings.
Glen Trool *Gleann t'struthail*, glen of the river-like loch.
Kirroughtree *Caer Uchtred*, the fortress of Uchtred, twelfth-century Lord of Galloway. Or possibly from the Norse *kjarr or tre*, marsh of alder trees, *circa* 900 AD, which fits the nearby lowland.

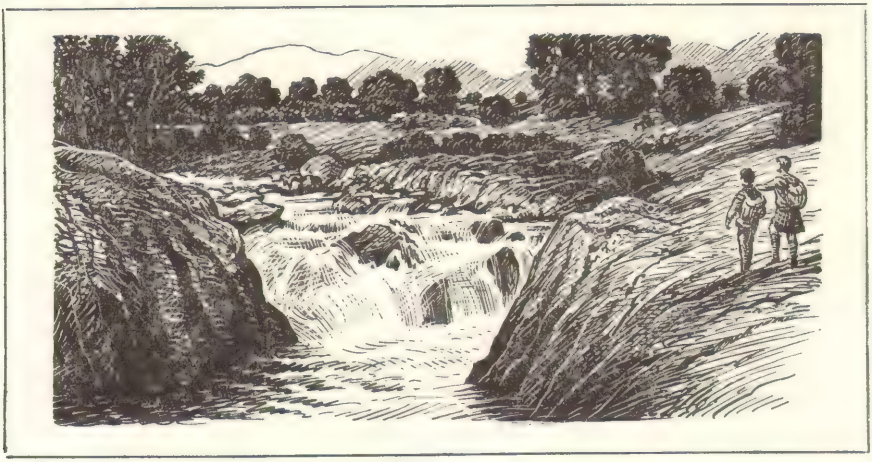
Other Features

Auchinleck *Achadh na leac*, field of the flat land.
Balloch *Bealach*, mountain pass.
Bargrennan *Bior grianan*, the sunny point.
Caldons *Caltuinn*, the hazels.
Challoch *Tealach*, the smithy.
Clauchaneasy *Clachan eas*, stone hamlet by the waterfall.
Craigencallie *Creag an caoile*, rock of the narrow gap.
Dalry Pronounced dal-*rye*, from *dal righ*, the King's meadow.
Flow Norse *flaa*, peat moss or shallow lake.
Nick Norse *nek*, narrow defile or pass.
Straiton Norse *streife tun*, hill-pasture homstead.
Tunskeen Norse *tun*, farmstead, plus Gaelic *sgithean*, thorn trees.

Among thae wild mountains shall still be my path,
Ilk stream foaming down its ain green narrow strath
For there wi' my lassie, the day lang I rove,
While o'er us unheeded flee the swift hours o' love.

Yon Wild, Mossy Mountains

The Linn



Approaches to the Park

The lie of the land around the Galloway Forest Park is such that the main approach routes run in only two directions—from the south by the roads that follow the lowlands bordering the Solway Firth, or from the north-west by routes leading out of Ayrshire. Of these two alternatives, that from the south is the one more usually taken, and it will be described first; for convenience in outlining these southern approaches, it is assumed that the visitor makes first of all for the town of Newton Stewart, a convenient centre for reaching all the seven forests that make up the Park.

Routes to Newton Stewart

By Rail. The nearest railway stations now in operation are at Dumfries, Ayr, Girvan and Stranraer.

By Road. From Dumfries, a centre easily reached from the south of Scotland and the north of England, the traveller by road has the choice of two routes, which diverge at Crocketford, nine miles west of Dumfries. The northerly road, via New Galloway, is the more direct. and runs for fifteen miles beside Bennan and Kirroughtree Forests. The southerly road through Castle Douglas and Gatehouse of Fleet, though longer, is more picturesque, following the shoreline of Wigtown Bay for ten miles.

From Edinburgh the most direct road route is via Thornhill and New Galloway. From Glasgow, one may travel via Thornhill and New Galloway, or alternatively reach New Galloway by way of Ayr. A third road route from central Scotland runs through Ayr and Maybole and thence via Crosshill into Glen Trool Forest and so on to Newton Stewart.

Motor-buses. The Western S.M.T.Motor Bus Company (of Nursery Avenue, Kilmarnock) operates a regular service from Dumfries via Kirkcudbright to Newton Stewart, and also a service from Stranraer. The same company also operates a service from Ayr and Girvan to Newton Stewart, which passes through Glen Trool Forest at Bargrennan, four miles from the Caldons Camp Site (see **A** below).

From Newton Stewart to the Forest Park

To Glen Trool and the Camp Site

A. The most direct way is to follow the Girvan Road for nine miles to the village of Bargrennan where the road enters Glen Trool Forest. There take the right fork, and proceed past the House o' Hill Inn to Glen Trool Village and the grounds of Glencaird House. There branch right again,

cross the Minnoch Bridge and go straight on to Loch Trool and the Bruce Memorial, where the road ends. Just before the loch is reached, a side road on the right, which is signposted, leads in to the Camp Site at Caldons Farm. The Girvan bus service may be used as far as Bargrennan. The total distance from Newton Stewart to the Camp Site is 13 miles.

B. For the walker, cyclist, or unhurried motorist, an even more attractive route to Glen Trool runs up the east bank of the Cree from Minnigaff, just outside Newton Stewart. Follow the by-road through the woods and beside the river, and after crossing the Minnoch at Brigton, where this road enters Glen Trool Forest, turn right and cross the moor to the grounds of Glencaird House. There take a right turn, cross the Minnoch Bridge, and so join the main route up to Glen Trool and the Camp Site.

To Carrick Forest

Follow route **A** above as far as the grounds of Glencaird House, and there take the left-hand road which continues northwards. After a few miles, close to the Ayrshire boundary, Kirriereoch Loch will be seen to the right, and Loch Moan lies to the left, just out of sight from the road. At Rowantree this road forks and Carrick Forest begins.

The right-hand road runs over the Rig o' the Shalloch pass to Craiglure Lodge, Tairlaw and Straiton, providing access to the northern portions of Carrick Forest; to reach Loch Doon by road, however, it is necessary to go on through Straiton and round by Dalmellington.

The left-hand branch from Rowantree crosses the Nick o' the Balloch to South Balloch farm, proceeding thence outside the Forest Park to Maybole. A left-hand turning at South Balloch farm leads into the western part of Carrick Forest, close to Barr village.

To Kirroughtree Forest

This forest comes close to Newton Stewart on the east side of the River Cree. The best way to see it is to take the New Galloway road as far as Murray's Monument, a prominent landmark. This road is joined, four miles out of Newton Stewart, by a branch road from Palnure, which provides an interesting alternative for the return journey, and passes close by the large forest nursery at Dalt̲amie.

The central portion of Kirroughtree can be reached by going up the main street of Minnigaff, bearing right, and continuing north for five miles along the secondary road to Auchinleck. A turning to the east, three miles from Newton Stewart, gives a link with the main New Galloway road. The western side of Kirroughtree, around the Wood of Cree, is reached by bearing left in Minnigaff, and taking the road along the east bank of the River Cree.

To Clatteringshaws and Bennan Forests

Follow the New Galloway Road through Kirroughtree Forest. The boundary of Clatteringshaws Forest is reached 8 miles out, and the road runs through this forest and then through Bennan Forest for a further 8 miles to the outskirts of New Galloway. To see the older and more attractive portion of Bennan beside Loch Ken, turn right at New Galloway and follow the Kirkcudbright road for 5 miles to the old New Galloway Station.

Routes from points north of the Forest Park

The north-western portions of the Forest Park are readily accessible from the Ayrshire towns of Ayr, Maybole, and Girvan.

From Girvan or Barrhill to Glen Trool and the Camp Site

Follow the main Newton Stewart road via Bargrennan, avoiding the alternative road which runs by Loch Maberry. The Forest Park is entered as soon as the River Cree is crossed, 5 miles from Barrhill. At Bargrennan, 4 miles farther on, turn sharp left for Glencaird, Loch Trool, and the Camp Site, following route **A** as described in the Newton Stewart approaches above. The Girvan to Newton Stewart motor bus may be used as far as Bargrennan.

From Girvan to Carrick Forest

Take the cross-country road to Barr village, behind which the Changue plantations of Carrick Forest come plainly into view. By turning left at Barr, one may follow the road up the Stinchar valley to South Balloch, and turn right there for the Nick o' the Balloch route into Carrick Forest, and so on to Rowantree, Glen Trool, or Bargrennan.

From Maybole to Carrick Forest and Glen Trool

There are two routes, one almost due south by Crosshill, Glenalla Fell and South Balloch to the Nick o' the Balloch pass, the other via Straiton and Craiglure Lodge. These roads unite at Rowantree, whence one may proceed southwards to Glencaird for the main approach to Loch Trool and the Camp Site (route **A** above).

From Ayr or Dalmellington to Carrick Forest and Loch Doon

From Dalmellington take the New Galloway road for 1½ miles, and then fork right. Follow the side road across the head of the Ness Glen and proceed up the shores of Loch Doon until, 4 miles from the main road, the Forest Park boundary is reached. The re-erected ruins of the ancient Loch Doon Castle stand on the loch side some 3 miles farther on, beyond which the road ends near the head of the loch. This approach is useful to walkers as a starting point for tracks to Glen Trool and other points to the south and west.

Maps

On the one-inch scale, the Ordnance Survey (Scotland) sheet 73 entitled 'New Galloway' covers the whole Park area except for the northern part of Carrick Forest which appears on (Scotland) sheet 67 entitled 'Ayr'.

On the half-inch scale, Messrs. Bartholomews' sheet 40, entitled 'Ayrshire' shows the whole of Carrick Forest. Their sheet 37, entitled 'Galloway', includes the whole of Glen Trool, Kirroughtree, Clatteringshaws and Bennan, also Garraries and Dundeugh Forests.

The geology of the whole Region is shown on the Ordnance Survey Geological Map (Scotland) sheet 16, on the quarter-inch scale.

Books on Glen Trool and Galloway

The book that deals most intimately with the Glen Trool region is *Galloway: The Spell of its Hills and Glens*, by Andrew McCormick (John Smith, Glasgow, 1947). Much information on the Forest Park, its surroundings, and its history, will be found in *Highways and Byways in Galloway and Carrick*, by C.H.Dick (Macmillan 1916); and in *The Merrick and the Neighbouring Hills*, by J.M.McBain (Stephen and Pollock, Ayr).

There are some interesting chapters on the district in *Raiderland*, by S.R.Crockett (Hodder and Stoughton, 1904), and in *Tramps across Watersheds*, by A.S.Alexander (John Smith, Glasgow 1925).

The student of place names will find invaluable the *Carrick Gallovidian*, by J.Kevan McDowall (Homer McCririck, Ayr 1947).

The principal writer of fiction who deals with this area is S.R.Crockett, whose best-known work, *The Raiders*, has as its setting the Murder Hole and the Dungeon country. *The Five Red Herrings*, by Dorothy Sayers, has as its main scene the Minnoch Bridge near Bargrennan.

Romantic Galloway by John Herries McCulloch, published by the Galloway Publicity Association, Castle Douglas, is a well-illustrated account of the whole region; while a *Guide to Newton Stewart* is published by the Galloway Gazette.

A very readable miscellany and dialect glossary is *The Scottish Gallovidian Encyclopaedia*, written by John McTaggart in 1824, and republished by Hamilton, Adams & Co., London, in 1876. The classic poem by John Barbour (*circa* 1320–95), entitled *The Bruce*, which includes several references to the Glen Trool country, was re-published by Maurice Oyle & Co. of Glasgow, in 1869. The following passage calls for quotation:

In Glentruewall a quile he lay
And went weyle oft to hunt and play
For to purkess them venesoun
For than der war in sesoun.

Other recent publications include:

The Story of Galloway, by J.E.Robertson (J.H.Maxwell). *The History of Galloway*, by Dr.J.A.Russell (Blacklock and Farries, Dumfries). The *Third Statistical Account of the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright* and *Seeing Scotland—Dumfries and Galloway*, by Jack House (Oliver and Boyd), the last-named being largely photographic.

Antiquities

In 1826, there were found in Loch Doon nine boats or canoes, each formed of a single oak tree hollowed out and shaped somewhat like a fishing boat. The largest measured twenty feet in length, by three feet three inches broad. In one of the canoes were found a battleaxe and parts of a lady's shoe.

The Glen Trool hoard, a more recent discovery, is preserved in the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland at Edinburgh. It dates from the Middle Bronze Age, about 1000 BC, and includes a rapier, a palstave or bronze axe, a spearhead, a double-edged knife and two razors, all of bronze, together with beads of amber and glass.

Ancient Monuments include:

Clatteringshaws Forest. Bruce's Stone, on Raploch Moss (in the charge of the National Trust for Scotland).

Carrick Forest. Loch Doon Castle; Cairn at Linfern Farm, Cairnannock.

Dundeugh Forest. Dundeugh Castle; Traces of the De'il's Dyke at Woodhead and Langerie.

Glen Trool Forest. White Cairn, north-east of Bargrennan; Cairnfore Cairn, Tarfessock; King's Cairn, Killiemore; Cairn Kinna, Corrafeckloch; Old Bridge of Minnoch, Bargrennan; Sheuchan's Cairn, Bargrennan; Chambered Cairn at Cairnderry.

Legend and History

When Robert the Bruce was hiding from the English in the wild country around Glen Trool, he sheltered at the cottage of a widow, who had three stalwart sons, Murdoch, McKie, and McClurg, each by a different father. When they expressed a desire to join Bruce's forces, the king set them a test in archery, requiring them each to shoot one of three ravens upon the wing. Murdoch was successful, McClurg missed, but McKie performed the amazing feat of bringing down two ravens transfixed by a single arrow. The McClurg stone in Minnigaff churchyard perpetuates this remarkable event.

The ancient overlords of these Galloway highlands were the Kennedys; about the year 1500 Lord Kennedy of Cassilis held the title of 'Ranger of the Forest of Buchan', a district which embraces the wild hills around

Loch Trool. But the name 'Buchan' arose from an early overlordship, that of the Comyns of north-eastern Scotland, with whom Bruce waged a feud around AD 1300.

In former times the gatherers of herbs wandered over the crags of the Forest of Buchan in search of a lichen called corklit, which yielded a red dye in demand for dyeing soldiers' coats. The following traditional rhyme tells us where they were most successful:

> The Slock, Millquarker, and Craignine,
> The Brishie and Craignaw,
> The five best hills for corklit,
> The spaewife ever saw.

The flat land at the head of Loch Trool is known as The Soldiers Holm, from its association with the Battle of the Steps of Trool in AD 1307. Before that it was called Ringielawn, from the Gaelic *roinn na' leamhan*, the point of the elm trees.

In 1703 the Mid-steeple, a prominent building in Dumfries, was built using oak from the Wood of Garlies on the River Cree. At that time this natural oakwood was the nearest source of large timber in south-west Scotland.

Robert Burns in the Glenkens

'Glenkens. A glen amongst rocks. This is the wildest glen in Galloway, extending into many parishes. In the heart of it is the Loch o' Ken, a lovely lake, Newgalloway Clauchan, and the ancient seat of the Gordons of Kenmore. It is a most romantic place; it was on his way through it (in

Robert Burns and Mr Sims ride through the Glenkens

riding from Dumfries to Gatehouse), that Burns composed the chief of national songs, '*Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled*'. He did this during a storm of rain, the storm, and the wild situation in which it catched the poet, must have aided those uncommon manly breathings of the song to burst forth. He was accompanied in his journey by his friend, Mr. Sims, who wrote out the story. Galloway, then, must have some share in the honour of giving birth to the famous effusion, and a *small share even*, is surely a great honour.'—John MacTaggart. *The Scottish Gallovidian Encyclopaedia.* London 1824.

General Information

Information given in this chapter shows current facilities at time of printing and is therefore liable to change from time to time.

Camping Grounds (*see plate 25*).

Caldons Caravan and Camping Ground is a well established and popular site occupying a pleasantly wooded and sheltered position beside the south-eastern end of Loch Trool. Caldons has excellent facilities, including flush toilets, wash-basins, with free hot and cold water, electric shaver points, hot and cold showers, clothes drying cabinets and washing machine. The site is supervised by a resident Warden and Caldons shop can cater for the day to day needs of visitors. The milkman and butcher call. There is also a village store and post office in Glen Trool Village, 3 miles from the site.

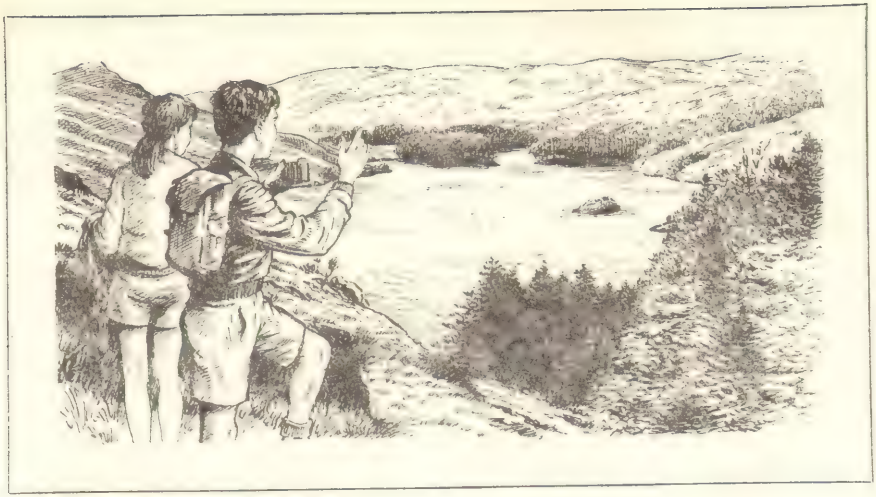
The current (1974) charges are 27p per person per night for adults and 13p per young person 5–15 years, all inclusive VAT. For children under 5 there is no charge. Charges are subject to review, from time to time.

Bookings are not arranged in advance, permits being issued during the season (approx 1st April–30th September) at camp site. Enquiries should be addressed to: The Recreation and Amenity Forester, Glen Trool Forest Office, Bargrennan, Newton Stewart (telephone Bargrennan 228), or during the season to The Warden, Caldons Caravan and Camping Ground, Bargrennan, Newton Stewart, Wigtownshire (telephone Bargrennan 218).

Talnotry Caravan Site. A new site opened in May 1971 to help meet the increasing demand for holiday facilities in Galloway. Like Caldons it lies within the Glen Trool Forest Park in a lovely setting on the banks of the Palnure Burn, close to Murray's Monument and the Grey Mare's Tail waterfall, adjacent to the main New Galloway to Newton Stewart road (A712), some 7 miles from Newton Stewart. For the time being only caravans can be accommodated at Talnotry and only caravans with their own chemical closets, as the facilities are limited to water standpipes and an elsan disposal point. Charges are 10p per person per night and 5p per young person 5–15. There is no charge for children under 5.

Enquiries should be addressed to the Recreation and Amenity Forester at address shown above.

Camping Grounds for Youth Organisations. Separate camping grounds are reserved solely for the use of Youth Organisations. For these, advance bookings can be arranged on application to the Recreation and Amenity Forester at address shown above.



Loch Trool

One is near the main Caldons Caravan and Camping ground, another at Borgan, a third at Burnfoot, Wood of Cree, and a fourth at Daltonae Wood, Kirroughtree.

Deer Museum and Wild Goat Park

The Deer Museum is established in the outbuildings at Clatteringshaws Farmhouse beside Clatteringshaws Loch, on the Newton Stewart–New Galloway roadside (A712). Here an exhibit has been staged giving information on both red deer and roe deer, and also on wild goats. It is hoped to extend it to embrace allied countryside subjects: e.g. the geology and botany of the Forest Park.

The Wild Goat Park occupies the Crags of Craigdews Hill which borders the Newton Stewart–New Galloway road (A712) from the Grey Mare's Tail burn to Craigdews House. It is close to the Talnotry Caravan site. Here a small herd of wild goats have been established so that visitors may see them relatively easily from the road on most days.

Hotel Accommodation

Hotels conveniently situated for visitors to the Forest Park include the following:

Bargrennan, Glen Trool Forest: House o' Hill Hotel, Garlies Lodge.
Newton Stewart: Black Horse Hotel, Creebridge House Hotel, Crown Hotel, Galloway Arms Hotel, Cairnsmore Hotel, Kirroughtree House Hotel, Belhotel, Glencairn, Duncree House.
Creetown: Ellangowan Hotel.

New Galloway: Cross Hotel, Ken Bridge Hotel, Kenmure Arms Hotel.
Dalry: Lochinvar Hotel, Milton Park Guest House.
Carsphairn: Salutation Hotel.

Further information on accommodation and touring facilities, etc., may be obtained from the Tourist Officer, South-west Scotland Tourist Association, Douglas House, Newton Stewart, or from local offices at Castle Douglas and Gatehouse of Fleet.

Youth Hostels

Two Youth Hostels lie close to the Forest Park, one being at Minnigaff, Newton Stewart, and one at Kendoon near Dalry. From each of these easy access is made either by road or on foot into Kirroughtree and Dundeugh Forests respectively. Paths lead on into the other forests in the Park. Other Hostels within reach of the Park, for a cyclist, lie at Gatehouse of Fleet and Stranraer.

Fishing

The fishing in most of the waters in the Forest Park is reserved, but permits for certain waters in the Forests listed below may be obtained on application to the addresses stated.

Glen Trool Forest: No fishing or canoeing is permitted on Loch Trool itself. Day tickets for fishing in the Upper Minnoch are obtainable from Glen Trool Forest Office, Bargrennan; or the Warden at Caldons Camp.

Carrick Forest: (Lochs Bradan and Lure only): Forestry Commission, Greystone Park, Moffat Road, Dumfries.

Clatteringshaws Forest: (Clatteringshaws Reservoir) and Garraries Forest (Loch Dee): Forestry Commission, Albyn Cottage, Dalry, Castle Douglas.

Farms below Loch Doon, looking towards The Merrick

Kirroughtree Forest: (Black Loch and Loch of the Lowes). Day tickets from the Warden at Talnotry Caravan Site or Forest Office, Daltamie, Palnure, Newton Stewart.
River Cree, Kirriereoch Loch and Palnure Burn: Newton Stewart and District Angling Association.

The fishing from the banks of Loch Doon is free; boats may be hired from the Colinton Hotel at Dalmellington.

A rose-bud by my early walk,
Adown a corn-inclosed bawk,
Sae gently bent its thorny stalk,
All on a dewy morning.

Ere twice the shades o' dawn are fled,
In a' its crimson glory spread,
And drooping rich the dewy head,
It scents the early morning.

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